

Gender and Party Politics in Finland

Explaining regional differences in women's political representation within a political party

Eeva Sofia Kärkkäinen

University of Helsinki
Faculty of Social Sciences
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HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract <p>Finland is considered one of the best countries in the world in regards gender equality. In today's Finland, women are more educated than men and they vote more actively. However, women are a still a minority in the Finnish parliament, and are less likely to serve as ministers as well as in other powerful political positions. Furthermore, there are large variations among Finnish political parties when it comes to the proportion of woman parliamentarians.</p> <p>The Finnish Centre Party is one of the least balanced political parties in Finland when it comes to the proportion of female parliamentarians. However, there are great regional differences. This Master's Thesis is a case study that aims to explain what causes these regional differences.</p> <p>First, the study explores how women's political representation has developed in different constituencies over time when it comes to the number of elected female parliamentarians. Starting from the 1991 election until the 2015 election, the quantitative overview of the constituencies shows that there are substantial differences between the electoral constituencies. These show in gender parity of elected parliamentarians, as well as the share of the votes that female candidates have received for their party's list. Furthermore, constituencies differ when it comes to the turnover in the composition of the group of elected parliamentarians. The first part of the study also addressed constituencies' differing trends in regards to women's representation – some constituencies were more gender balanced, others more male dominated.</p> <p>Based on the first part of the study, three case studies are selected for in depth case studies: Kymi, Oulu and Central Finland. The case studies are explorative in nature and conducted by interviewing central Centre Party actors, parliamentarians and candidates who have experience in the workings of the regional party organization. Interviews are analysed by using thematic analysis. Based on the interviews it is clear that while all Centre Party organisations have the same formal rules, the list formation process, the regional practises and the electoral setting are different in all three constituencies.</p> <p>The study provides support to many findings of previous studies. In accordance with previous feminist institutionalist research, the supply of candidates seems to be a challenge for the Centre Party, but according to the interviewees the supply of woman candidates is a challenge in all three constituencies. Therefore, it is unlikely that the supply of candidates could explain regional differences.</p> <p>A major difference between the constituencies is their electoral setting and the role of regional party organisation and actives. Based on the interviews it seems that in the Kymi constituency, the constituency with the fewest female parliamentarians, internal competition is less equal as the incumbent parliamentarians have a strong position within the Centre Party organisation. The setting changes when an incumbent parliamentarian steps aside. When an elected parliamentarian steps down, it creates a situation where more voters and supporters are available for newcomers. It seems, however, that female candidates have not succeeded in inheriting supporters from the relinquishing parliamentarians.</p>			
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract			
<p>Suomea pidetään yhtenä maailman tasa-arvoisimmista maista. Nykypäivän Suomessa naiset ovat koulutetumpia kuin miehet ja äänestävät miehiä aktiivisemmin. Tästä huolimatta naiset ovat edelleen vähemmistö eduskunnassa ja naisia löytyy miehiä vähemmän politiikan huipulta. On tärkeää huomata, että puolueiden välillä on kuitenkin suuria eroja naiskansanedustajien määrässä.</p> <p>Suomen keskusta on yksi eduskunnan miesvaltaisimmista puolueista. Vaalipiirien välillä on kuitenkin suuria eroja sen suhteen, paljonko niistä on tullut valituksi keskustalaisia naiskansanedustajia. Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma on tapaustutkimus, joka pyrkii löytämään selityksiä näille vaalipiirien välisille ja alueellisille eroille.</p> <p>Ensimmäinen osa tutkimusta kartoittaa, miten naiskansanedustajien määrä on kehittynyt eri vaalipiireissä. Tutkimus käy läpi eduskuntavaalit vuodesta 1991 vuoteen 2015 ja osoittaa, että keskustalaisten naiskansanedustajien määrässä on merkittäviä eroja vaalipiirien välillä ja naisehdokkaiden keräämät äänimäärät sekä naisehdokkaiden määrä vaihtelevat runsaasti. Lisäksi vaalipiirit eroavat siinä, minkä verran alueen keskustalaiset kansanedustajat ovat vaihtuneet vuosikymmenien aikana. Tutkimuksesta käy myös ilmi, että vaalipiirit ovat kulkeneet eri suuntiin tasa-arvon suhteen, kun osasta on tullut vuosikymmenien aikana miesvaltaisempia ja toisissa naisten edustus on kasvanut.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen ensimmäisen osan perusteella kolme vaalipiiriä – Kymin, Oulun ja Keski-Suomen vaalipiirit – valitaan tarkemman tarkastelun kohteeksi. Näitä vaalipiirejä tutkitaan haastattelututkimuksella, jossa haastallaan vaalipiirien keskeisiä keskustatoimijoita, keskustan piirijärjestöjen puheenjohtajia, toiminnanjohtajia, kansanedustajia, kansanedustajaehdokkaista ja muita keskeisiä taustavaikuttajia, jotka tuntevat vaalipiirien toiminnan läheltä. Haastattelut analysoidaan teemaattisen analyysin keinoin. Haastattelujen perusteella on selvää, että vaikka kaikissa vaalipiireissä ehdokaslistojen muodostamisessa ja vaalitoiminnassa noudatetaan muodollisesti samoja puolueen sääntöjä, käytännössä vaalipiirien ja keskustapiirien toimintatavat ja vaaliasetelmat eroavat toisistaan.</p> <p>Tutkimuslöydökset ovat sikäli yhteneväisiä aiemman tutkimuksen kanssa, että kaikissa vaalipiireissä keskustatoimijat nostavat esiin, että naisehdokkaista on hankalampi löytää keskustan listoille kuin miehiä. Toisaalta naisehdokkaiden vähyys on kaikkien kolmen vaalipiirin yhteinen ongelma, joten se ei riitä selittämään piirien välisiä eroja naiskansanedustajien määrässä.</p> <p>Merkittävä ero vaalipiirien välillä on vaaliasetelmassa ja keskustan piirijärjestöjen ja puolueaktiivien roolissa. Haastattelujen perusteella Kymin vaalipiirissä, jossa naisia on mennyt läpi vähiten tutkituista vaalipiireistä, puolueen ehdokkaiden välinen kilpailu on epätasaisempaa ja istuvilla kansanedustajilla on vahvempi asema piirijärjestöissä kuin kahdessa muussa vaalipiirissä. Asetelma muuttuu, kun joku istuvista kansanedustajista ilmoittaa luopuvansa tehtävästään, jolloin uusille yrittäjille on jaossa tukijoukkoja ja ääniä. Näyttää kuitenkin siltä, että naisehdokkaat eivät ole onnistuneet perimään itselleen tukijoukkoja luopuneilta kansanedustajilta.</p>			

Table of Contents

<i>1. Introduction</i>	6
1.2. Research Question	7
1.3. Research Outline	8
<i>2. Theory</i>	9
2.1. Political representation	9
2.2. Gender and political representation	11
2.3. Explaining women's political representation	13
2.4. Gender and political parties	15
2.5. Finnish Political Parties and Gender Equality	17
2.6. The Centre Party of Finland	20
<i>3 Method and Data</i>	24
3.1. Mixed Methods	24
3.2. Gathering quantitative data	25
3.3. Interviews	25
3.4. Analysis	28
<i>4 Quantitative data</i>	30
4.1. South Savo	31
4.2. Helsinki	34
4.3. Uusimaa	36
4.4. Varsinais-Suomi	38
4.5. Häme	40
4.6. Pirkanmaa	43
4.7. Satakunta	45
4.8. Vaasa	47
4.9. Kymi	50
4.10. Central Finland	53
4.11. North Savo	55
4.12. North Karelia	58
4.13. Oulu	60
4.14. Lapland	64
4.15. Summary of quantitative data	66
<i>5. Case Studies</i>	71
5.1. Candidate selection process in Kymi, Central Finland and Oulu	71
5.2. Influencers	79
5.4. Ideal Candidate	92
5.5. Resources	94
5.6. Electoral Setting	99
5.7. Why fewer women?	104
<i>6 Discussion</i>	110
6.1. Kymi Constituency	111
6.2. Oulu Constituency	113
6.3. Central Finland Constituency	114
6.4. Explaining differences	115
<i>7 Conclusions</i>	119
<i>References</i>	122
Appendix	132
Appendix 1	132
Appendix 2	134

Appendix 3	135
Appendix 4	136
Appendix 5	137
Appendix 6	138
Appendix 7	139
Appendix 8	140
Appendix 9	143
Appendix 10	145

1. Introduction

Finland is considered to be one of countries with the best gender equality. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2016, which measures the relative gaps between men and women when it comes to health, education, economy and politics, Finland is number two in the world after Iceland on equality between men and women (Global Gender Gap Index, 2016). On women's political participation, Finland has been a forerunner. It was the first country in the world to give women full political rights including the right to vote as well as to register as a candidate in elections in 1906. Significantly, the current parliament has achieved gender parity as there are 47 percent female and 53 percent male parliamentarians.

While Finland has witnessed a rise of female politicians since the early 20th century, development has not been linear. In fact, the previous government had 35 percent female ministers, which was less than the governments had had since 1991. Women are also still less likely than men to serve in the most powerful political positions (Niemi, 2017). Similarly, until now men have prevailed in numbers in the parliament. 41.5 percent of parliamentarians were women in the 2015-2019 period while in 2011-2015 this figure was 42.5 percent. The recent 2019 election has changed the picture in gender equality. In the current parliament, 47 percent of the parliamentarians are women and 53 percent are men. A precedent of women's representation has been set. However, the variation of gender balance between political parties is notable when it comes to gender parity. While the parliamentary group of the Green Party has 85 percent female parliamentarians, Left Party 53 percent and Social Democratic Party 57 percent women, the Finns Party's parliamentary group has only 30 percent and Centre Party's group 32 percent women.

In August 2017, I wrote a newspaper article in which my aim was to expose why the Centre Party is male dominated compared with other political parties (Kärkkäinen, 2017). What I found intriguing was the fact that there were significant differences between electoral constituencies. In fact, between the elections 1991 and 2015, there were no women elected from Satakunta or Kymi constituencies to the Centre Party's parliamentary group. Meanwhile, in Häme

women had had strong position throughout the years and in North Savo and Central Finland constituencies gender balance was achieved during these years. Based on the initial research that I provided in my article, my interest lies in studying whether it is possible to find factors that could explain these regional differences. Could this provide further explanation to the question of why there are fewer women in Centre party's parliamentary group?

1.2. Research Question

In Finland today, women are more educated than men (Statistics Finland, 2016, p. 23) and they vote more actively (Statistics Finland, 2015). However, they are still a minority in the Finnish parliament and less likely to serve as ministers as well as in other powerful political positions. While there are several reasons for unequal political representation of women and men, it is evident that political parties are central actors influencing gender parity. (See for example Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Women's political representation is often analysed by comparing countries or political parties but what do we find when we compare the same party in different parts of the country?

Knowing that a Master's thesis has limited scope to provide extensive analysis, this study focuses on one party, the Centre Party of Finland (Centre). It is a valid research subject as it is one of the largest parties historically in the Finnish Parliament and has a male dominated parliamentary group. Consequently, Centre has influenced, and still influences, gender parity in the whole Parliament. Furthermore, Centre is an interesting case study as there are great regional differences when it comes to the number of elected female parliamentarians. I believe that focusing on one political party adds to the existing literature and helps draw a more nuanced picture of women's political representation and gender and party politics.

The research question of this research is therefore: *What can explain regional differences in women's political representation within a political party?*

1.3. Research Outline

In the following chapters' the research question will be answered based on earlier research and empirical study. To begin with Chapter 2 discusses previous research and theories on women's political representation and introduces key concepts such as the concept of political representation, gender and feminist institutionalism. Additionally, the Finnish context and the Centre Party of Finland are introduced. Chapter 3 introduces and elaborates on the research method employed. This study is an explorative case study that uses *sequential mixed method design*. In this particular design, quantitative method is used for data-gathering purposes in order to develop and inform the qualitative part of the study. Interviews are analysed using thematic analysis. Chapter 4 begins analysis by studying the state of gender parity in constituencies. Quantitative data reveals significant differences between constituencies when it comes to the number of elected female Centre parliamentarians. Based on this data three constituencies are chosen for in-depth case studies. Chapter 5 analyses three constituencies based on interviews with central party actors, and findings are discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 draws a conclusion, summarising findings of this Master's Thesis.

2. Theory

This chapter introduces earlier studies and theoretical context of researching women's political representation. The first section briefly discusses the concept of *political representation* and delineates why it is important to research women's *descriptive representation*. The second section introduces the concepts of *gender*, *new institutionalism* and *feminist institutionalism* that are useful for this research as it is seeking to explain the persistence of gendered social structures in a political party. The third section describes previous research on women's political representation, introducing among others *the supply and demand model for political recruitment*. The final chapter applies political theory to Finland; presenting existing studies on gender and party politics in Finland as well the subject of this study, the Centre Party of Finland.

2.1. Political representation

Before going deeper into the previous studies on political parties, politics and gender, the concept of political *representation* needs to be discussed. While it is a basic assumption that in a democratic regime citizens' interests are – or at least should be – represented in the political decision-making, scholars, theorists and politicians struggle defining what is good representation. (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2014, pp. 1-3) Academic literature often makes a distinction between substantive and descriptive representation, where descriptive representation refers to number of politicians belonging a particular group and substantive representation refers to a group's interests being represented. When it comes to women and politics, there is a longer tradition of studying women's descriptive representation. This can be partly because descriptive representation is easier to measure and uses as a dependent variable in quantitative research. (Wägnerud, 2000, p. 52)

If half of the population is women, what is fair representation of women in political positions? Emelie Lilliefeldt notes in her dissertation *European Party Politics and Gender – Configuring Gender-Balanced Parliamentary Presence* (Lilliefeldt, 2011, p. 2) that many studies have not set a clear border but have instead focused on comparing numbers of female parliamentarians aiming to explain differences

between the countries and parties (for example Kittilson 2006). Those scholars that have aimed to define fair representation have set the bar to varying heights. Lilliefeldt divides gender balance into three categories. Drawing from Kanter (1997) she defines *full gender balance* as a parliamentary party that has 40 to 60 percent of each gender, and depending on the time and country, parliamentary parties with more than 20 or 25 percent women are defined as being *more gender balanced than biased*. *Complete absence of balance* means having no women (or men) parliamentarians (Lilliefeldt, 2011, p. 4). Drude Dahlerup's and Monique Leyenaar's (2013) take a somewhat different approach in their book, *Breaking Male Dominance in Old Democracies*, where they develop a model for identifying male dominance in politics. In the model, women's numerical representation in elected assemblies is one of the dimensions. In Dahlerup's and Leyenaar's model, less than 10 per cent women in elected assemblies is called male dominance, 10-25 percent women means large minority of women and 40-60 percent women is gender balance. For the purposes of this research, the commonly used 40-60 percent proportion of women and men is a useful definition, since it best suits Finland who has high standards when it comes to gender equality. Also, 40:60 is the bar that has been set for example to the Finnish municipal committee gender quotas.

But do numbers matter? Why is it important that there are women in parliaments? Can male politicians represent women's interests? In her influential book *The Politics of Presence* (1995), Anne Phillips suggests that female politicians are better at representing women's interests because women and men have different life experiences when it comes to many everyday matters such as child-caring, occupations or exposure to sexual harassment. Phillips' argument, and the idea of 'women's interest', has been both criticized and supported by other scholars. Critics argue that the concept of 'women's interest' views women and men as fixed categories and overlooks women's differing interests when it comes to class, ethnicity or age. Also, the concept has been claimed for overlooking the fact that women's interests might vary over time. (See for example Wägnerud 2000, Dietz 2003 and Dahlerup 2014, pp. 59-75). However, it seems that women politicians do make a difference to some extent. Wägnerud (2000) goes through empirical

studies that have studied the effects of increased number of women politicians on political outcomes, and concludes that 'female members of parliament tend to prioritize issues that are also prioritized by female voters' (Wägnerud, 2000. p. 62). Furthermore, she suggests that based on empirical research it seems that female politicians contribute to strengthening the position of women's interests in politics. (Wägnerud, 2000. p. 65)

Despite the complexity of defining women's interests and fair representation, according to Wägnerud the share of seats in parliament is a widely accepted indicator of women's political inclusion in society (Wägnerud, 2000. p. 53). I claim that researching women's descriptive representation is relevant in order to better understand how our democratic system works, and how it could become more inclusive for all. Women's descriptive representation does not tell everything about the state of equality in a country, but as women make half of the population, it is a sign of structural inequalities if they are not equally represented in political decision-making.

2.2. Gender and political representation

In order to understand the persistence of gender inequalities in political parties, this research draws from the vivid field of *New Institutionalism* and *Feminist Institutionalism* research and theories. In New Institutionalism theories *institutions* are understood as the *rules that structure political and social life* – in contrast to old institutionalism in which the institutions are defined more narrowly in organizational terms. Having this broader concept of institutions, New Institutionalism approach is able to explain the persistence of social structures. (Krook and Mackay 2011, foreword)

Feminist institutionalism adds gender into the analysis, focusing on institutional processes and practices that enlarge gender inequalities (Krook and Mackay 2011, pp. 2-3). Feminist institutionalism emphasises that norms, rules and practises that work within institutions include gendered aspects. This in turn influences the political outcomes of these institutions and the focus of power. (Mackay, Kenny and Chappell, 2010, p. 573) Feminist institutionalism is useful for researching

political parties from a gender perspective. Ultimately it aims to explain how gender inequalities are produced and maintained through institutional processes, practices, images, ideologies and distributional mechanisms (Kantola, 2017, p. 97).

According to feminist institutionalism, political actors work within a *gendered* society. This means that, just like the broader society, political parties are shaped by different perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Mona Lena Krook and Fiona Mackay (2011) define *gender* as ‘a scale of masculinity and femininity along which behaviour and attitudes may be ordered’. Gender is always present in social life through norms and behaviour that reflect widely accepted ideas of masculinity and femininity. Our ideas of masculinity and femininity are not fixed. Instead, they vary over time and differ in different cultures (Krook and Mackay, 2011, foreword). Gender is often understood to be *socially constructed*, in contrast with the biological concept of *sex*. However, some feminists have contested this definition for taking sexed body as something given instead of understanding the socially constructed nature of body, sex and sexuality. (Kantola, 2017, p. 26) In this study the concept gender is included into the analysis because the aim of the study is not in solely describing women’s representation in the Centre Party, but also including both women and men, and our ideas of masculinity and femininity, into the analysis, and critically examining the supposed gender neutrality of the party practices.

While this study focuses on equality between women and men, it is important to note that these groups are heterogeneous and there are various ways to be a man or be a woman. Accordingly, for example black, Muslim, transgender or lesbian women might have different experiences compared with white heterosexual women. Finally, there are also people who do not fit in either to the male or female categories. (Waylen et al. 2013, pp. 15-16) Thus, the question of political exclusion is far more complex than the number of women in parliaments. It is not only white women who are a minority in politics but also transgender people, or those men who do not represent the traditional idea of a male politician. Thus, while the main

focus of this study lies in the number of female parliamentarians, it is important acknowledge this complexity.

2.3. Explaining women's political representation

An influential study that aims to explain why certain people have become members of the political elite is Pippa Norris' and Joni Lovenduski's (1995) pioneering work, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. In their study Norris and Lovenduski develop a supply and demand model of political recruitment that suggests that the outcome of a political recruitment process is created in an interactive process where both the *supply* of aspirants, candidates who wish to run for office, and *demands* of party gatekeepers, selectors, who select the candidates, have an influence. As Norris and Lovenduski notify, both supply and demand side factors of the process are gendered meaning that ideas, norms and practices of femininity and masculinity shape women's thinking when they consider running for parliament, as well as the party elite's behaviour when they rank potential candidates. (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) The supply of candidates is formed, first of all, by resources that are available for the aspirants (time, money, experience) and secondly aspirants' motivation (ambition, interest, drive) to seek political positions. Factors that contribute to the gendered nature of supply side are our ideas of gender that lead women to having lesser time, money, confidence and ambition than men, and thereby shape the supply of female aspirants. On the demand side the political elite selects candidates based on their assumptions of what they expect to bring votes to their party. Demand side being gendered means for example that the party elite may consider female aspirants less competent than their male counterparts or hesitate to select female candidates because they expect the electorate to favour certain kind of candidates. (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) (Krook, 2010, p. 162)

In her article, *Why Are Fewer Women than Men Elected? Gender and the Dynamics of Candidate Selection*, Krook (2010) continues Norris and Lovenduski's work but moves forward from the idea of 'political market', a concept that according to Krook gives a misleading impression that supply and

demand of candidates would efficiently, like a market, find the equilibrium. Building on the previous research, Krook concludes that the norms and practices of gender shape the supply of female candidates by influencing their career paths and ability to hold public office. For example, certain types of backgrounds, experiences and characteristics have been historically encouraged upon men and discouraged among women. Therefore, women tend to underestimate and men overestimate their qualifications to run for political office. Consequently, the same features, such as being a parent, might be an advantage for male politicians while reflect on women unfavourably. (Krook, p. 162) (Lawless and Fox, 2005, p. 12) (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, p. 116) Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox (2011) test the hypothesis that men overestimate and women underestimate their qualifications to run for office empirically. In their study they use data from a United States nationwide survey of more than 2,000 "potential candidates" Lawless and Fox find that women are significantly more likely than men to look down on their qualifications and make excuses for entering the electoral arena, even though they share the same professional and educational background and rely on the same calculation when they evaluate their qualifications (Lawless and Fox, 2011, p. 70).

On the demand side, the processes of discrimination appears in individual-level gender expectations and stereotypes. For example, male political leaders, elected officials or activists are more likely to encourage men than women to run for political office (Krook, 2010, p. 163). Drawing from Kittilson (2006) who finds a strong statistical correlation between the proportion of women on party executive committees and the percentage of party representatives who are female, Krook suggests that 'the demand for female candidates is shaped not only by gendered norms of competence, but also the gender identities of those in charge of soliciting aspirants and nominating candidates' (Krook, 2010, p. 163). For example, David Niven's (1998) who examined local party elites using a four-state survey of party county chairs and locally elected women, discovered that the potential female candidates were subject to bias in recruitment process because the (male) party chairs consistently preferred candidates more like themselves. According to Krook this indicates that our ideas of gender distorts the operations 'political

market' in ways that exclude women even when they would be motivated and qualified to run for political positions. (Krook, 2010, p. 162).

2.4. Gender and political parties

There are numerous explanations for unequal representation of women and men in politics, but political parties play a vital part in most of them. Norris and Lovenduski suggest that the political parties are central gatekeepers in political recruitment processes through which some individuals successfully become politicians. Also, several other important studies make similar suggestion (Baer 1993, Caul 1999, Dahlerup 2007). But it is not only the recruitment process where political parties play a role. According to Russel J. Dalton (2008) political parties are the "primary basis of public influence in representative democracies" by linking citizen's interest with policy making. Parties define the choices available for voters by providing programmes for each election as well as recruiting candidates running for seats (Dalton, 2008, p. 123). Therefore, political parties are an extremely important research object when aiming to explain gender equality and inequalities in politics.

From an *actor-centred institutionalist* perspective, political parties are collective actors that have their own strategies, preferences and internal institutional settings but also actors that act within institutional and social frames set by the wider society (Lilliefeldt, 2011, p. 19, and originally Scharpf, 1997). For a long time, political parties were male-only organizations, and all male political leadership was taken for granted. Women's roles have changed in post-industrial societies compared to the early years of political parties. Along with women's strengthened social position when it comes to education, labour market and political rights, male dominance in party politics has gradually started reducing, and political parties have started incorporating 'women's issues' into their agenda. (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003, pp. 1-3) (Lilliefeldt, 2011, p. 17) (Dahlerup and Leyenaar, 2013, p 1.) (Kittilson, 2006, p. 129) However, different parties have reacted differently to the pressure to promote female candidates and gender equality. According to Miki Caul Kittilson (2006) parties have hesitated to address the demands to bring women's voice to politics because it threatens the 'powerful

interests within the party organization' (Kittilson, 2006, p. 129). In those cases, were certain parties across Western Europe have focused on raising the number of female candidates, the process has been contested. According to Kittilson 'shifts in attitudes, women's voting patterns, and women's grassroots party activism explains *why* parties might have incentive to promote female candidates, but to a large extent the varying strategies of women within parties explain why women did gains *when* they did.' (Kittilson, 2006, p. 130)

2.4.1. How do a party's inner and external conditions influence gender balance?

According to Emelie Lilliefeldt (2011), previous research shows that party behaviour is an outcome of party preferences and organisational structure as well as the environment in which the party acts. Conditions that have been commonly used when women's representation in parliaments has been explained include a wide variety of institutional, intra-party and social conditions. Institutional conditions include factors such as electoral rules. For example, proportional electoral systems and closed list ballot structure have been identified as factors that support gender balanced representation (Norris, 2006). Intra-party conditions that have been discussed include factors such as party ideology (left, green or conservative), party institutionalisation (bureaucratic rule-based party, or a party that is based on personal networks and patronage), party magnitude, candidate selection processes (localized or centralized), party rules including party's internal gender quotas and proportion of women in party leadership (Caul Kittilson, 2006) (Norris, 1993) (Lovenduski, 1993). Finally, social conditions include women's position in the country in which party acts. Examples of social conditions that have been found to support gender equality are post-modern social values, egalitarian values such as social democracy and protestant religion as well as women's high participation in public life including paid labour and higher education (Norris, 2004) (Rosenbluth et al., 2006) (See also Lilliefeldt's comprehensive outline of the previous studies in Lilliefeldt, 2011, pp. 18-37).

Emelie Lilliefeldt stresses in her dissertation *European Party Politics and Gender: Configuring Gender-Balanced Parliamentary Presence* (2011) and article *Party and*

gender in Western Europe revisited: A fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis of gender-balanced parliamentary parties (2012) that, by creating the favourable platform for parties to change, it is the complex interaction of both party characteristics and external conditions that leads, or does not lead, into gender-balanced parliamentary delegations. Thus, external conditions cause that 'one type of organisation may be successful in reaching their goals in one environmental setting, while the same combination of actor characteristics and orientations can be suboptimal in another environment or situation.' (Lilliefeldt, 2011, p. 22).

Many of the previous studies have focused on comparing nations aiming to explain differences in women's representation on county level, but it is worth noticing, that as Kittilson (2006) points out, in many cases 'variation in the proportion of women to men is even greater across parties than across nations' (Kittilson, 2006, p. 8). Great differences across parties are also present in Finland. I suggest, however, that we can go beyond comparing parties. What makes this study exceptional is, that it is aiming to find explanations for variations within a political party. Having the focus on variations within a party, this study is able to standardize many of the conditions presented above, including institutional conditions as well as many of the intra-party conditions, because electoral rules as well as party ideology and rules are same in all Centre party's Regions.

2.5. Finnish Political Parties and Gender Equality

Political parties are central actors in recruiting politicians and supporting their career paths. Therefore, it is crucial to research political parties in order to understand why women are still under represented in Finnish political life. The state of equality between men and women seem to differ between Finnish political parties. An obvious sign of this is the variations when it comes to the number of female parliamentarians. While Finnish political life, including parliamentary and communal politics, has been studied from gender perspective, gender equality within political parties is a rarer research topic in Finland. Even the most basic descriptive studies that would follow the development of women's representation in Finnish political parties on local and national level are largely missing,

especially when it comes to the developments that have taken place during the past three decades.

In her dissertation *Gendered Political Representation in Finland* (2011) Jaana Kuusipalo addresses that despite the fact that Finland has been a forerunner when it comes to women's political rights and women's high representation in national politics, women and men had differing political and social role in Finland until the 1990s (Kuusipalo 2011). This horizontal gender segregation started diminishing in the 1990s when glass ceilings were broken and women and male cabinet ministers were appointed to "unconventional" policy sectors (Kuusipalo 2011, p. 12). However, the first female Minister of Finance was appointed as late as 2011, and as Niemi (2017) points out, women are still less likely than men to serve in the most powerful political positions. In her dissertation Kuusipalo emphasizes the role of parties' political woman organizations for equal representation of women in Finnish politics (Kuusipalo, 2011, p. 30, pp. 53-65, p. 112) On the other hand, Miki Caul Kittilson (2006) suggests in her book *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments*, that the role of woman organizations has been less prominent in Finland than in Britain and Germany. Instead, Kittilson says, Finnish female politicians have avoided becoming 'isolationist' within their parties. Kittilson's finding is that it is the favourable electoral rules, culture of equality in Finnish society and the electoral system that allow women politician to lobby female voters instead of their parties that contribute to the relatively high number of women in the Finnish parliament. This is in accordance with the Finnish tradition that seeks equality by building on a gender-neutral society where differences between men and women are hidden, rather than highlighted (Julkunen, 1994, s. 20-21).

2.5.1 Voter's role in Finnish open list electoral system

As Kittilson notes in her research, Finnish electoral rules that include proportional electoral system and open candidate list are unique, allowing voters to cast their vote for an individual candidate and thereby determine the order of candidates on the list (Kittilson, 2006, pp. 105-106 and p. 132). Parties receive seats in each constituency in proportion to their share of the votes, and the candidates who

receive those seats are ranked in accordance to the number of their personal votes. This gives voter's preferences greater weight determining what kind of candidates succeed in elections. If parties nominate both men and women, in Finnish system voters can choose between male and female candidates, and thus directly influence gender balance in the parliament without needing to make compromises when it comes to preferred political party (Giger et al, 2014). This is in contrast with for example single-member district system where parties' choices have huge impact. Therefore, in the supply and demand model for political recruitment, voter preferences are a more central demand-side explanatory factor in Finland than in many other countries.

How do voter's preferences influence gender balance in Finnish Parliament and Centre's parliamentary group? According to Holli and Wass (2010) traditionally both men and women were more likely to vote for male candidates in parliamentary election but this has changed over time. When it comes to voters' preferences, a candidate's gender seems to be a more important issue for Finnish female voters than for men (Holli and Wass, 2010). However, the 2015 Election Study reveals that same-gender voting is more common among men. In the 2015 parliamentary election 73 percent of male voters voted for man, and 52 percent of the female voters casted their vote to woman (Pikkala, 2016). When it comes to Centre party voters, 47 percent of women voted for female candidate and 78 percent of men for male candidate (Pikkala, 2016). The quick explanation for Centre's unbalanced parliamentary group would be suggesting that conservative men who are not willing to vote female candidate support the party. However, based on these numbers, it is impossible to judge whether voters' candidate selection is based on gender preferences, or if they would have chosen differently in a different context and supply of candidates. Giger, Lefkofridi, Holli and Wass research the role of context to same-gender voting in their article *The gender gap in same-gender voting: The role of context* (Giger et al 2014). They suggest that the gap between women and men's propensity to choose a same-sex candidate greatly decreases and almost disappears in larger district magnitude and gender balanced candidate lists. Exploring whether contextual factors influence voters' choices,

Giger et al conclude that the pattern of same-gender voting is strongly affected by external conditions. (Giger et al, 2014)

While voters determine the order of the candidates, political parties decide what kind of candidates they accept (or attract) on their lists. Finnish political history shows that the number of elected female parliamentarians has been closely linked with the number of female candidates on party lists in Finland (Kuitunen 1997, pp. 47-48) indicating that voters are willing to vote for women when parties include female candidates on their lists. This conclusion is supported by Giger et al who suggests that the supply of woman candidates reduces gender gap in same-gender voting (Giger et al 2014).

2.6. The Centre Party of Finland

The Centre Party of Finland was founded as an agrarian party called Agrarian League (Finnish: Maalaisliitto) in 1908. Since then, the party has successfully reformed itself, sustaining its support among voters despite the industrialization that has decreased the number of voters living in rural areas working in farming. During the electoral term 2015-2019 the Centre Party was the largest parliamentary party in Finland. In the 2015 election it got 21,1 per cent of the Finnish votes gaining 49 seats in the parliament that has 200 seats in total. A closer look into Centre's election results shows, however, that the rural past is still present in party's support. In 2015 Centre was weakest in Finnish capital electoral constituency, Helsinki, gaining only 7,2 percent of the votes. Also, Centre is a rather small party in other Southern electoral constituencies where a large part of the population lives in big cities (Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku). Uusimaa (11,5%), Pirkanmaa (16,6%) and Varsinais-Suomi (16,2%) are all electoral constituencies where the party is notably weaker than in the whole country in general. The strongest support Centre receives is from two Northern constituencies, Lappi (42,9%) and Oulu (42,7%) as well as in East, Savo-Karelia (32,5%). It is worth noting that outside the so-called "populous Finland" (*ruuhka-Suomi*), Centre is strong also in the main cities such as Jyväskylä, Kuopio and Oulu. (Statistics Finland)

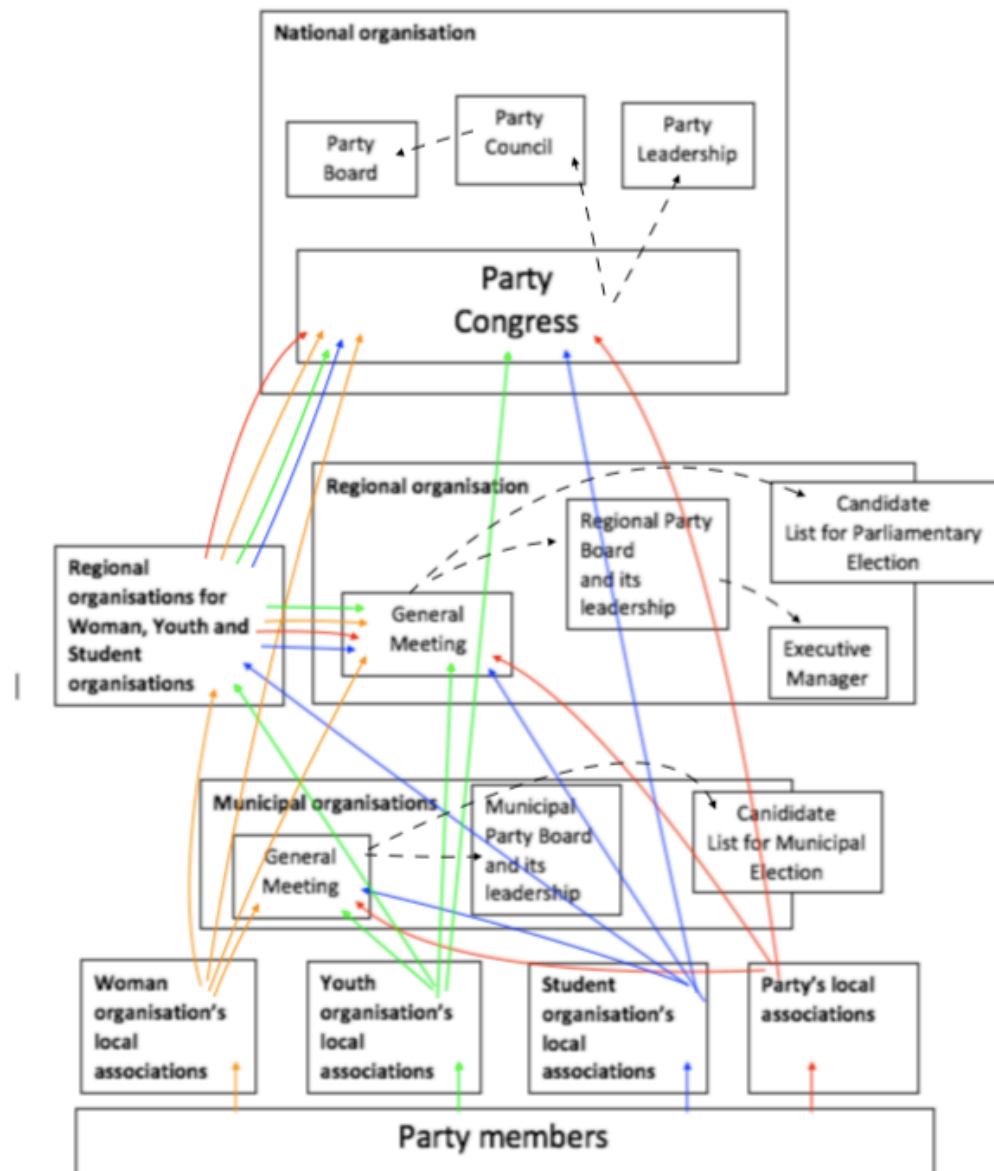
When it comes to the party ideology, at the European level party belongs to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, but in the Finnish context it is often considered to be a somewhat conservative party. Based on the data from voting aid applications launched by the main Finnish media corporations, Helsingin Sanomat and Yle, under election 2015, party's candidates were quite heterogeneous when it comes to their position on the economic right-left and value liberal-conservative scales, but on average, a Centre Party candidate was economically slightly centre-right, and when it comes to values, slightly on the conservative side of the scale (Leinonen and Niemivirta, 2015). The same holds when it comes to the elected parliamentarians (Salomaa, 2015) and the party's voter profile (Westinen, 2016). What has been common to Centre politicians and supporters is their attitude that supports developing Finland's rural areas and keeping the whole country populated (Westinen, 2016, p. 267).

While there are several central politicians who have influenced Centre's ideology, an influential figure is Santeri Alkio who was one of the party's founders in the early 1900's. Rauli Mickelsson (2015), draws from Seppo Kääriäinen's dissertation (Kääriäinen, 2002) when he describes that Alkio was an individualist who believed that individual people have a central role in developing societies, and their need to grow as human beings should be placed in the centre of all social development (Mickelsson, 2013, p. 69). While this rhetoric sounds rather liberal, in centre party's party programmes liberalism is combined with social and environmental responsibility, Christian values and idea of community and locality (Mickelsson, p. 68-69, 298-301).

Centre's organisational structure is typical for a Finnish political party. What makes centre party organisationally deviant is the fact that with its 112 000 members it is clearly the biggest political party in the country (Puolueiden jäsenmäärät laskevat, 2016). Figure 1 below is a rough and simplified illustration of Centre Party's organisational structure. It is a modified version of Karina Jutila's flow chart in her dissertation on Centre Party's decision-making processes, adding mentions for candidate lists, and excluding some parts of the information that

Jutila includes in her version (Jutila, 2003, p. 35). Colourful arrows illustrate representatives; dashed line arrows illustrate decision-making power.

Figure 1: Centre Party's Organisational Structure



As the figure above illustrates, Centre's party members are members in one of the party's local associations (Finnish: perusjärjestö, paikallisjärjestö or paikallisyhdistys). Local associations in turn belong to one of the party's *Municipal Organisations* as well as one of the *Regional Organisations*. In addition to the regional centre party organisation, youth, student, and woman organisations belong to their own regional organisations that have same rights as the party's

regional organisations to send representatives to the party's highest decision-making organ, Party Congress (Finnish: puoluekokous). Also, all local associations and municipal organisations send their own representatives to *Party Congress*. Each organisation chooses its representatives in a *General Meeting*, and regional organisations' general meetings are the instances that make decisions over party's candidate lists for parliamentary elections in each constituency. This rule-based process will be explained more in details later in the analysis.

3 Method and Data

The aim of this research is to try to explain regional differences in gender balance of the elected Centre party parliamentarians. The research question is: *What can explain regional differences in women's political representation within a political party?* The previous chapter presented previous research and central theoretical considerations regarding the topic of this research. In this method chapter theory will be merged with practice in order to explain how the research question will be answered.

3.1. Mixed Methods

In order to answer the research question, this study will be using both qualitative and quantitative data, and thus, research design follows mixed methods approach. The quantitative data gathering is needed, as there is no existing data that describes how gender balance has developed in different constituencies over time. In order to draw a rough picture of Centre's position in each constituency, the data gathering section of the research explores not only the number of female and male parliamentarians, but also centre's support in the constituency, proportion of female candidates as well as the percentage of votes that Centre's female candidates have received in over time. In the *sequential mixed method design* such as this research, quantitative method is used for data-gathering purposes and used in order to develop and inform the qualitative part of the study (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 5 and pp. 71-72). Here, quantitative data is used in order to draw a rough picture of the state of women's representation in different constituencies in order to choose relevant regions for closer examinations. Three differing constituencies are chosen: one where gender balance that is above the constituency average, one where the number of female parliamentarians elected is close to party's average and one where there have been significantly fewer female parliamentarians elected than in other constituencies in general. This is done in order to be able to conduct a case study by comparing three different constituencies and explore how they differ from each other. A case study is a valuable approach in this study as "what", "how" and "why" questions are central, researcher has a little control over developments, there is only a little existing empirical research on the topic and the researched topic is an existing real-world phenomenon (Eriksson and Koistinen,

2005, pp. 4-5). Finally, the three constituencies are analysed by interviewing party actors from each constituency.

3.2. Gathering quantitative data

To begin with, this study will present the quantitative data showing how a large proportion of female parliamentarians have been selected from Centre party in each electoral constituency in parliamentary elections starting from the 1991 election until the 2015 election, and how many women have been Centre's candidates in each constituency. In addition to the number of female parliamentarians and candidates, the proportion of votes that female candidates have received, as well as Centre's electoral support in the constituency have been included into the analysis. The time period 1991-2015 has been chosen in order to get a large picture, but since the aim of the research is to explain today's phenomenon and not the history, in the interviews the main focus is recent developments. The time period starts from 1991 as since 1990's women's position in Finnish politics has gradually broadened and we have seen women in diverse ministerial positions (Kuusipalo, 2011). Data has been conducted and analysed before the 2019 election, and therefore the latest election has not been analysed. Data is gathered from the Finnish Parliament's archives as well as Statistics Finland. This data is needed in order to pick three different cases for in depth study: one constituency where women's representation has been particularly low during the researched parliamentary elections, one average constituency and one constituency where women have been somewhat equal to men. Choosing three differing constituencies allows identifying whether the chosen party regions differ in candidate recruitment procedures and practises in a way that could explain differences in women's representation.

3.3. Interviews

Interviews are conducted with Centre Party actors from three different electoral constituencies: Central Finland, Oulu and Kymi. Two of the constituencies cover two separate regional party organisations: Oulu constituency includes both North Ostrobothnia and Kainuu regions and Kymi constituency covers Kymenlaakso and Karelia regions. As North Ostrobothnia region is clearly the main Centre Party organisation in Oulu constituency (seven out of nine elected centre party

parliamentarians come from North Ostrobothnia) this study focuses on that part of the constituency only, interviewing four (4) party actors from the region. In Kymi constituency, Karelia and Kymenlaakso are relatively equal regions and therefore party actors from both constituencies have been interviewed, four (4) party actors from Kymenlaakso and four (4) party actors from Karelia. Finally, three (3) party actors have been interviewed from Central Finland. Due to long distances, the interviews are carried out mainly through video calls.

The interviewees are chosen based on their previous or current experience on Centre party's regional operations that provides them expertise on the research topic. When it comes to the interviewees' profiles, similar set of interviewees have been selected from each constituency, including current or former executive managers of Centre's regional party organizations, current or former chairpersons of the regional party organizations, female parliamentarians or female candidates who have conducted strong campaigns in the constituency, as well as other well-known background influencers who have experience of the workings of the regional party organization. A majority (10 out of 15) of the interviewees is women. The pool of interviewees is diverse in order to ensure that the interviewees will bring different perspectives to the research question as well as provide diverging opinions. The starting point of the research was to interview three actors from each region, but in Oulu, Karelia and Kymi the pool was increased during the process, in order to gain a nuanced enough set of perspectives. During the research, the anonymity of the interviewees has been a priority. A major disadvantage following the anonymity is that it limits possibilities to describe how interviewees' background influences their analysis on the research topic when presenting the analysis. However, anonymity offers the interviewees a safe environment to analyse and express their honest opinions on sensitive questions. It is clear that interviewees would have not analysed their constituency's situation and open wounds as openly if their anonymity was not guaranteed.

Interview questions include questions of the candidate list formation process, campaigning, candidates and attitudes toward gender equality. While it is

necessary that all interviews follow the same trajectory (see Appendix 8) so that it is possible to compare and aggregate the data that identifies differences in the party processes and electoral campaigns in different constituencies, the structure of the interviews is open so that it leaves the interviewees enough room to present their reflections. In practice, the focus of the interviews depends also on the knowledge that each interviewee provides: an interviewee with work experience as executive manager of a regional organisation provides a different perspective on the recruitment process than a candidate who has not been deeply involved with the party. Furthermore, during interviews the interviewees are encouraged to talk about their activities and give examples as these types of answers often reveal more about the processes than general principles. (Meusel and Nagel, 2009, pp. 31-35) Thus, the interview technique is open-ended.

3.3.1. Researcher's and interviewee's role

From an interview methodical perspective, there are several notions to make regarding the concept of knowledge, as well as the interviewees and researcher's role in this study. The role of the interviewees is manifold. In this research, party actors are interviewed mainly as informants or experts: they know in practice how the recruitment process works on the regional and local level, and they are therefore able to describe the process as well as analyse why gender inequalities exist or have disappeared within their constituency. On the other hand, this research also explores the interviewees' subjective attitudes and ideas regarding these processes and gender equality, because, as feminist theories suggest, they can reveal how the gendered norms and attitudes influence the process. Especially the local party elite's attitudes have an impact in the candidate selection process. (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) (Mackay, Kenny and Chappell, 2010)

The interviewees are experts in their regional party processes but at the same time many of them are also politicians who are part of the regional Centre party elite, or some of them are candidates who have been unsuccessfully trying to get elected to the parliament. It is important to note that interviewees can only present their points of view on the questions presented to them. Interviewees are not objective sources and each of them has their own interests regarding the

research topic. Also, the quality of the knowledge they provide can vary. Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to be well prepared for the interviews, and thereby able to make central questions and critically evaluate the answers. (Alastalo et al, 2017, p. 181-195) (Bogner et al., 2009) Since an interview is an interactive process, everything that the interviewee says is guided by what they suspect to be the case in relation to 'interviewer's competence, professional background, normative orientations and attitudes, and possible influence within the relevant field investigation' (Bogner and Menz, p. 57). These interaction effects are, according to Bogner and Menz, 'constitutive and even productive components of the course of every interview' (p. 74).

Centre is an interesting case study for me personally, as I am an active Centre party member myself. Having a party affiliation can be both a challenge and a resource for a researcher. Bogner and Menz have named this interview position as *accomplice*, meaning that the interviewee assumes shared identity and/or normative orientations with the interviewer. An insider-position can become a problem in the interview situation if the researcher cannot question the supposed "common-ground" with the interviewee, as the researcher wants to sustain the relationship of trust with the interviewee (Bogner and Menz, 2009, p. 68). Furthermore, it is a problem if the group affiliation weakens the researcher's objectivity during the research project. However, according to Bogner and Menz, the insider-position is an advantage to the researcher in the interview-situation if the researcher is seen as someone who is particularly worthy of trust, and gains therefore access to confidential information (Bogner and Menz, 2009, p. 68). At best, the insider-position benefits the researcher as it provides them with a deeper understanding of the topic and helps in build trust with the interviewees (Juvonen, 2017).

3.4. Analysis

Recorded interviews are transcribed and the 215 pages of transcripts are analysed using *thematic analysis*, an analysis that can be used in analysing large qualitative data sets (MacQueen and Namey, 2012). The purpose of the analysis is to *explore* how Centre party forms its candidate list in each constituency and *identify* characteristics that *explain* why certain people have succeeded with their

campaigns, as well as *compare* findings from the three constituencies. In order to gain an overall understanding of the material, transcripts are first read and key themes identified and marked to the texts. The amount of data is then reduced to a more manageable form by identifying 23 themes that have been listed in a matrix, and each interview is read again searching for the interviewees' stance on each theme and adding these to the matrix. Finally, the list of 23 themes has been iterated into the following themes:

1. Process: how the candidate selection process functions in the region?
2. Influencers: who are the main influencers in the candidate selection process and what interests do they have?
3. Ideal Candidate: what are the characteristics of a good candidate?
4. Resources: where does a candidate find a support group and financing for the campaign?
5. Election Setting: what is the election setting like in the region, is there real competition between candidates?
6. Women: what makes women less willing to run for parliament?

Themes have risen partly from theory and some of them were included in the interview questions, partly from the researched material (interviews) by identifying themes that appeared relevant based on the interviews. For example, the election setting was not included in the interview questions as such, but as the interviews proceed and during the analysis it turned out to be a central factor that makes constituencies different from each other. Finally, constituencies have been compared in order to understand what characteristics they have in common and how they differ in each theme.

4 Quantitative data

Following chapters will introduce the quantitative data gathered in order to explore the state and development of gender representation of Centre Party in each constituency. This part of the study is presented relatively detailed as the data is not available anywhere else and it is therefore a central contribution that this study provides. Moreover, this part of the study motivates the selection of the three case studies. The names of the elected parliamentarians are collected from the Finnish Parliament's annual books that tell the composition of Centre Party's parliamentary group each electoral year (Eduskunta, 9). The percentage of female candidates has been retrieved from Statistic Finland's annual books and electronic databases.

There have been several electoral constituency reforms during the examined years, where some electoral constituencies have been renamed or merged, and a number of municipalities have moved from one electoral constituency to another. The first major electoral reform was after the 1995 election when all constituencies were renamed (see Appendix 1). Later, the Kuopio constituency became the North Savo constituency and the Mikkeli constituency became the South Savo constituency, and at the same time some municipalities switched constituencies. The last electoral reform in 2015 merged Eastern constituencies into bigger units, North Savo and North Karelia were merged into the Savo-Karelia constituency and South Savo and Kymi constituencies were merged into South-Eastern Finland constituency. To make comparisons simpler in this research constituency division follows the division that was in use most of the examined time. Therefore, for example North Savo constituency is called North Savo throughout the research, instead of changing between different names. Candidates and elected MP's from Eastern constituencies in the 2015 election are allocated into constituencies they would have belonged to in the previous constituency division (See Appendix 2). Minor changes in the municipal divisions have not been considered.

4.1. South Savo

South Savo was a small constituency with two regional Centre party organizations: The Itä Savo region with one major city Savonlinna, and the South Savo region with a major city Mikkeli. Just before the South Savo constituency was merged together with Kymi constituency into the South-Eastern Finland constituency in 2015, there were six parliamentarians elected from the constituency. Table 1 below shows Centre's support in South Savo, the percentage of elected female parliamentarians, the share of votes female candidates have received as well as the proportion of female candidates on Centre's party list in parliamentary elections during the period 1991-2015.

Table 1: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for the party's female candidates and the proportion of female candidates in South Savo constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland 1)

Election	Centre %	Woman MP %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	33.4	33.3	33.9	35.7
1995	27.0	33.3	22.4	35.7
1999	33.5	33.3	26.1	28.6
2003	40.5	33.3	36.7	42.9
2007	37.4	50.0	39.8	50.0
2011	26.8	50.0	45.7	35.7
2015*	32.5*	50.0*	40.6*	42.9 **

** In the 2015 election South Savo constituency was part of the South-East Finland constituency. Numbers have been calculated by examining the support for Centre in 14 municipalities: Enonkoski, Heinävesi, Hirvensalmi, Joroinen, Juva, Kangasniemi, Mikkeli, Mäntyharju, Pertunmaa, Pieksänmäki, Puumala, Rantasalmi, Savonlinna and Sulkava. See Appendix 4.*

*** In the 2015 election South Savo constituency was part of the South-East Finland constituency. Candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appendix 2.*

Table 1 shows that Centre's support has been strong throughout the years in South Savo. In the 1991-2003 elections 33.3 percent of the elected candidates were women and it has been 50 percent since the 2007 election. Male candidates have received a larger proportion of the votes than female candidates, however, there have been also fewer female candidates running. In most elections female candidates have received a smaller share of the votes in relation to the percentage of female candidates, however, in 2011 female candidates received 45.7 percent of the votes even though only 35.7 percent of the candidates were women. In 2015 ,the women's share of the votes was relatively close to the percentage of female candidates.

Table 2 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from South Savo starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. Sign x in the cell "new" denotes that the parliamentarian has been chosen to the parliament for the first time. The penultimate column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column shows the percentage of female candidates on Centre party's list in the constituency.

Table 2: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in the South Savo constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Kauppinen, Riitta		w	1991	33.3 %	35.7 %
Komi, Armas	x	m	1991		
Lehtosaari, Markku		m	1991		
Komi, Armas		m	1995	33.3 %	35.7 %
Lehtosaari, Markku		m	1995		
Rehn, Vuokko	x	w	1995		
Komi, Katri	x	w	1999	33.3 %	28.6 %
Leppä, Jari	x	m	1999		

Nousiainen, Pekka	x	m	1999		
Komi, Katri		w	2003	33.3 %	42.9 %
Leppä, Jari		m	2003		
Nousiainen, Pekka		m	2003		
Komi, Katri		w	2007	50.0 %	50.0 %
Leppä, Jari		m	2007		
Komi, Katri		w	2011	50.0 %	35.7 %
Leppä, Jari		m	2011		
Kosonen, Hanna	x	w	2015*	50.0 %*	42.9 %*
Leppä, Jari		m	2015*		
In total	6/18	7/18		38.9 %	38.8 %**

** In the 2015 election the South Savo constituency was part of the South-East Finland constituency. Parliamentarians and candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency divisions. See Appendix 2.*

*** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

During the examined elections, eighteen parliamentarians had been elected from Centre party in South Savo, and on average 38.9 percent of them were women. Between 1991 and 2003 one in three parliamentarians was a woman, and since 2007, when the number of elected Centre parliamentarians dropped to two, the proportion of women and men has been 50:50. It is worth noting that there has not been a single election where two women have been elected at the same time: Vuokko Rehn was elected after Riitta Kauppinen, Katri Komi after Rehn and Hanna Kosonen after Komi. When it comes the proportion of women on the party lists, on average 38.8 percent of the Centre candidates in South Savo have been women. Examination shows that there has been some turnover in the parliamentarians throughout the years. During the examined elections, altogether 33.3 percent of the elected parliamentarians were elected to the parliament for the first time. During the examined years a couple of parliamentarians, Jari Leppä and Katri Komi, have had long careers in

parliament. Komi was elected four times and Leppä, who served as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in the previous government, was in his 5th electoral term.

4.2. Helsinki

The Helsinki constituency was the second biggest constituency in Finland in the 2015 election with its 22 parliamentary seats. For the Centre Party the capital is the most challenging constituency as there have been only one to two elected Centre parliamentarians from this constituency. Table 3 below shows Centre's support in Helsinki, the proportion of elected female parliamentarians, the share of votes for female candidates as well as the proportion of female candidates on Centre's party list in parliamentary elections between 1991-2015.

Table 3: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Helsinki constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Woman MP %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	6.0	0,0	38.2	45.0
1995	3.7	-	68.7	52.6
1999	6.1	0.0	17.2	45.0
2003	8.1	50.0	84.9	47.6
2007	6.9	100.0	77.5	57.1
2011	4.5	100.0	83.6	47.6
2015	7.2	0.0	39.9	36.4

As Table 3 shows, both the proportion of elected female parliamentarians and the women's share of votes have varied widely from election to election in Helsinki. A probable explanation for this is that typically there has been one leading candidate receiving most of Centre's votes in Helsinki, and their gender strongly influences the picture.

Table 4 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from Helsinki starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. The

penultimate column shows the proportion of elected female parliamentarians, and the second to last column shows the proportion of female candidates on the Centre Party's list in the constituency.

Table 4: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Helsinki constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Rehn, Olli	x	m	1991	0,0 %	45,0 %
-		-	1995	-	52,6 %
Aho, Esko		m	1999	0,0 %	45,0 %
Jäätteenmäki, Anneli		w	2003	50,0 %	47,6 %
Salovaara, Pertti	x	m	2003		
Kiviniemi, Mari		w	2007	100,0 %	57,1 %
Kiviniemi, Mari		w	2011	100,0 %	47,6 %
Rehn, Olli		m	2015	0,0 %	36,4 %
In total	2/7	3/7		42,9 %	47,3 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

In Helsinki, getting elected from Centre's list has often required the candidate to be high-profile, and many of the parliamentarians have indeed started their career in another constituency before running in Helsinki. Esko Aho (1999) was the former Prime Minister and party leader, Anneli Jäätteenmäki (2003) was the party leader and a Prime Ministerial candidate, Mari Kiviniemi (2007) was a former minister and Olli Rehn (2015) was the former European Commissioner when they were elected from Helsinki (Eduskunta 1, 2, 3 and 4). In most elections there has been only one Centre representative elected from Helsinki. Between 1991-2015 Centre received two seats in Helsinki only once, in 2003. At the time, Anneli Jäätteenmäki who was the popular Centre Party leader at the time, became the first woman Prime Minister of Finland later, advanced another candidate to the parliament with her. In Helsinki Centre's electoral lists have been fairly balanced, on average 47.3 percent of the candidates and 42.9 percent of the elected parliamentarians have been women.

4.3. Uusimaa

In the 2015 election Uusimaa was the biggest constituency in Finland, with 33 parliamentarians elected from the constituency. For Centre Uusimaa is a slightly stronger constituency than Helsinki, but as table 5 shows, in the 2015 parliamentary election Centre received 11.5 percent of the votes cast in Uusimaa, which was significantly less than the party's support in generally in Finland.

Table 5: Support for the Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in the Uusimaa constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	12.2	0.0	17.8	33.3
1995	7.7	0.0	16.0	37.5
1999	10.7	33.3	23.0	37.5
2003	13.5	20.0	51.8	39.4
2007	12.4	25.0	23.1	44.1
2011	6.4	50.0	36.0	31.4
2015	11.5	25.0	37.0	36.4

Table 5 shows that while male candidates collected over 80 percent of Centre's votes in the 1991 and the 1995 elections, the trend has been toward stronger women's roles. In the 2003 election female candidates received more than half of the votes that were cast for Centre in Uusimaa, and in 2011 and 2015 women's votes have been more than their proportion of candidates. Often, the women's share of the parliamentary seats has not mirrored their share of the votes.

Table 6 presents all elected Centre Party MP's from Uusimaa starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. The penultimate column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column shows the percentage of female candidates on Centre Party's list in the constituency. Table 6 also shows that when it comes to the proportion of male and

female parliamentarians, Centre has been clearly male dominated in Uusimaa. Between the 1991 and 2015 elections on average 20 percent of the elected Centre parliamentarians were women in Uusimaa, even though Centre's electoral lists have been more balanced with, on average, 37.1 percentage of candidates being women. Within the chosen time span, a so called 'celebrity candidate', former Miss Finland, Tanja Karpela was the first woman politician who succeeded in making a breakthrough in the constituency. In 1999 her personal popularity rose the women's share of the votes above 50 percent in the 2003 election. Also, other elected women have been well-known: Paula Lehtomäki (2011) was a former minister who was first elected to the parliament from the Oulu constituency, and Anne Berner (2015) was a well-known business owner. During the examined years there have been many Centre politicians having long parliamentary careers in Uusimaa, such as Matti Vanhanen, Tero Mölsä, Tanja Karpela/Saarela and Antti Kaikkonen. However, there have also been some newcomers rising from Uusimaa regularly. During the examined years, 10 of 25 Centre parliamentarians have been elected to the parliament for the first time from Uusimaa, which makes 40 percent.

Table 6.: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Uusimaa constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Mölsä, Tero	x	m	1991	0.0 %	33.3 %
Vanhanen, Matti	x	m	1991		
Viljanen, Pekka	x	m	1991		
Väyrynen, Paavo		m	1991		
Mölsä, Tero		m	1995	0.0 %	37.5 %
Vanhanen, Matti		m	1995		
Väyrynen, Paavo		m	1995		
Karpela, Tanja	x	w	1999	33.3 %	37.5 %
Mölsä, Tero		m	1999		
Vanhanen, Matti		m	1999		
Särkiniemi, Seppo	x	m	2003	20.0 %	39.4 %
Kaikkonen, Antti	x	m	2003		

Karpela, Tanja		w	2003		
Lankia, Eero	x	m	2003		
Vanhanen, Matti		m	2003		
Kaikkonen, Antti		m	2007	25.0 %	44.1 %
Saarela, Tanja		w	2007		
Uusipaavalniemi, Markku	x	m	2007		
Vanhanen, Matti		m	2007		
Kaikkonen, Antti		m	2011	50.0 %	31.4 %
Lehtomäki, Paula		w	2011		
Berner, Anne	x	w	2015	25.0 %	36.4 %
Kaikkonen, Antti		m	2015		
Vanhanen, Matti		m	2015		
Viljanen, Eerikki	x	m	2015		
In total	10/25	5/25		20.0 %	37.1 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.4. Varsinais-Suomi

Varsinais-Suomi was a constituency with 17 parliamentary seats in the 2015 election. From the Centre party's perspective, Varsinais-Suomi includes both strong and weak areas. Centre has strong support in most municipalities and cities in the constituency, including areas such as Oripää where more than half of the voters voted for Centre, but had difficulties in the major city Turku (8.5%) where almost half of the constituency's voters live (Statistics Finland). Table 7 below shows that in the 2015 parliamentary election Centre's support in the Varsinais-Suomi constituency was 16.2 percent. Candidate lists have been relatively balanced (close to 40 percent or more women) throughout the years, except for a drop in 1999 when only 30.8 percent of the candidates were women. Also, in several elections women have acquired a significant proportions of the votes. In the 2015 parliamentary election 47.1 percent of the candidates were women, and they gained 47.9 percent of the votes. Most commonly, 1/3 of the elected Centre parliamentarians were women in Varsinais-Suomi, with the 1991 and the 2011 elections as exceptions.

Table 7: Support for the Centre Party, the proportion of elected female parliamentarians, the vote share for the party's female candidates and the proportion of female candidates in Varsinais-Suomi constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	22.9	25.0	48.4	38.5
1995	15.0	33.3	27.3	41.7
1999	16.9	33.3	29.7	30.8
2003	17.5	33.3	35.1	47.1
2007	15.8	33.3	43.7	50.0
2011	11.6	50.0	35.4	42.9
2015	16.2	33.3	47.9	47.1

Table 6 shows that Varsinais-Suomi has been a somewhat male dominated constituency, with on average 1/3 female parliamentarians. There are indications that Varsinais-Suomi has a tradition of having one strong woman Centre politician in the constituency: in 1991 it was Eeva Kuuskoski, a long-term parliamentarian who was first elected to the parliament from the National Coalition party in 1970, but soon switched her party alliance and represented Centre in the Varsinais-Suomi constituency until 1995, serving as the Minister of Social Affairs and Health (Eduskunta, 5). After Kuuskoski came Liisa Hyssälä who served a long career in parliament, also notably as the Minister of Social Affairs and Health (Eduskunta, 6). Hyssälä was followed by Annika Saarikko who serves as the Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services in Juha Sipilä's current government (Eduskunta, 7). Table 6 also shows that there has been a significant turnover among Centre's parliamentarians in Varsinais-Suomi. During the examined years altogether 21 Centre parliamentarians were elected from the constituency, and 38.1 percent of them were new.

Table 8: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and the percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Varsinais-Suomi constituency 1991-2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Ala-Nissilä, Olavi	x	m	1991	25.0 %	38.5 %
Järvilahti, Timo	x	m	1991		
Kuuskoski, Eeva		w	1991		
Laivoranta, Jarmo	x	m	1991		
Ala-Nissilä, Olavi		m	1995	33.3 %	41.7 %
Hyssälä, Liisa	x	w	1995		
Salo, Mauri	x	m	1995		
Ala-Nissilä, Olavi		m	1999	33.3 %	30.8 %
Hyssälä, Liisa		w	1999		
Salo, Mauri		m	1999		
Ala-Nissilä, Olavi		m	2003	33.3 %	47.1 %
Hyssälä, Liisa		w	2003		
Kiviranta, Esko	x	m	2003		
Hyssälä, Liisa		w	2007	33.3 %	50.0 %
Kaunisto, Timo	x	m	2007		
Kiviranta, Esko		m	2007		
Kiviranta, Esko		m	2011	50.0 %	42.9 %
Saarikko, Annika	x	w	2011		
Ala-Nissilä, Olavi		m	2015	33.3 %	47.1 %
Kiviranta, Esko		m	2015		
Saarikko, Annika		w	2015		
In total	8/21	7/21		33.3	42.6*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.5. Häme

Häme was a constituency with 14 parliamentary seats in the 2015 election. Centre party has two regional organizations operating in the area: Päijät-Häme and South Häme regional party organizations. Table 9 shows that in every election during 1991-2015 Centre's support was a few of percentage points weaker in the Häme constituency than nationally (Centre's national election results were in 1991 received 24.8%, 1995 received 19.8%, 1999 received

22.4%, 2003 received 24.7%, 2007 received 23.1%, 2011 received 15.8% and 2015 received 2.1%). Häme is a similar constituency to Varsinais-Suomi in that sense as Centre's support is strong in most of the region, but weaker in major cities: Hämeenlinna, Lahti and Riihimäki. Table 9 shows that female candidates have had a strong role collecting votes for Centre party's electoral lists in Häme. In most of the elections, female candidates collected more votes than male candidates. Women's strong position holds even when it comes to the percentage of female parliamentarians. In spite of the the 2007 and the 2015 elections, at least 50 percent of the elected representatives were women. Also, there have been more women running, if numbers for the 1991 and the 1995 elections are excluded, Centre's electoral lists have been balanced in parliamentary elections in Häme.

Table 9: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Häme constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Electio n	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	19.2	66.7	53.7	35.7
1995	14.4	100.0	70.7	28.6
1999	16.8	50.0	60.6	42.9
2003	18.4	66.7	61.2	42.9
2007	20.3	33.3	57.2	50.0
2011	13.2	50.0	51.5	64.3
2015	17.8	33.3	42.3	42.9

Table 10 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from Häme starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. The penultimate column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column the percentage of female candidates on Centre party's list in the constituency.

Table 10: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Häme constituency 1991-2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	1991	66.7 %	35.7 %
Lindqvist, Maija-Liisa	x	w	1991		
Tenhiälä, Hannu		m	1991		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	1995	100.0 %	28.6 %
Lindqvist, Maija-Liisa		w	1995		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	1999	50.0 %	42.9 %
Rehula, Juha	x	m	1999		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	2003	66.7 %	42.9 %
Lindqvist, Maija-Liisa		w	2003		
Rehula, Juha		m	2003		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	2007	33.3 %	50.0 %
Rehula, Juha		m	2007		
Autio, Risto	x	m	2007		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	2011	50.0 %	64.3 %
Rehula, Juha		m	2011		
Anttila, Sirkka-Liisa		w	2015	33.3 %	42.9 %
Rehula, Juha		m	2015		
Talja, Martti	x	m	2015		
In total	4/18	10/18		55.6 %	43.9 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

In the 1991-2015 elections, a majority of the elected Centre's parliamentarians from Häme were women. Characteristic for women's representation in the constituency, there are only two individual female politicians behind the strong numbers: Sirkka-Liisa Anttila, former Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (Eduskunta, 8), and Maija-Liisa Lindqvist. Altogether, there has not been much turnover in the elected group of Centre parliamentarians from Häme. During the examined years, four out of 18 parliamentarians have been new, which makes 22.2 percent new parliamentarians. In spite of the numerically strong performance of women, there have not been new female politicians rising from the constituency. After Lindqvist, all three new Centre politicians elected from Häme have been men.

4.6. Pirkanmaa

Pirkanmaa was a constituency with 19 parliamentary seats in the 2015 elections. There is one regional Centre party organization operating in the constituency. Pirkanmaa is, again, a southern constituency where a large proportion of the population lives in one major city, Tampere, in which Centre has difficulty finding support (Centre's support in Tampere was 10.5% in the 2015 election). There is one regional Centre party organization operating in the constituency. Compared to Centre's national proportion of the votes, Centre has low support in many of the constituency's smaller cities: Nokia (11.9%), Pirkkala (12.3%) and Valkeakoski (11.1%). (Statistics Finland)

Table 11 below presents how Centre's support has developed in Pirkanmaa over time, the proportion of elected female MPs, the proportion of votes female candidates have received and the percentage of women in the candidate list.

Table 11: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Pirkanmaa constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Women %	Candidates %
1991	11.4	50.0	34.5	33.3
1995	13.2	0.0	12.4	28.6

1999	14.7	100.0	23.7	31.3
2003	16.6	33.3	35.7	38.9
2007	16.3	0,0	26.0	44.4
2011	10.4	0.0	25.2	33.3
2015	16.6	0.0	19.7	36.8

Table 11 shows that despite the difficulties, Centre has achieved some gains in Pirkanmaa since 2003 (apart from the 2011 election which was difficult for Centre in the whole country). Examinations of the numbers at the municipal and city level shows that progress can be seen even in Tampere where Centre's support was 6.3 percent in 1991 and 10.5 percent in 2015 (Statistics Finland). When it comes to women's political representation, progress is lacklustre. During the examined years, Centre's list has had more than 40 percent female candidates only once, in 2007. When it comes to the proportion of women in candidate lists, there is no clear trend, and the proportion has varied between 28.6 and 44.4. The proportion of female parliamentarians and the women's proportion of the votes has decreased over time.

Table 12 below shows that Centre's latest female parliamentarian from Pirkanmaa, Jaana Ylä-Mononen, was elected in 2003. Over the examined time period 3 out of 16 elected Centre parliamentarians have been women, which makes less than 19 percent of all elected parliamentarians. While there have been some parliamentarians who have succeeded having a long career in the parliament (Mikko Alatalo four terms), there has been significant fluctuation in the composition of the elected group, and new names arising in every election. In the examined elections, 43.8 percent of the elected parliamentarians have been newcomers.

Table 12: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Pirkanmaa constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Morri, Helmi	x	w	1991	50.0 %	33,3 %

Vuorensola, Markku	x	m	1991		
Aittoniemi, Sulo		m	1995	0.0 %	28.6 %
Vuorensola, Markku		m	1995		
Ylä-Mononen, Jaana	x	w	1999	100.0 %	31.3 %
Alatalo, Mikko	x	m	2003	33.3 %	38.9 %
Pentti, Klaus	x	m	2003		
Ylä-Mononen, Jaana		w	2003		
Alatalo, Mikko		m	2007	0.0 %	44.4 %
Pentti, Klaus		m	2007		
Salovaara, Pertti	(x*)	m	2007		
Alatalo, Mikko		m	2011	0.0 %	33.3 %
Pirttilahti, Arto	x	m	2011		
Alatalo, Mikko		m	2015	0.0 %	36.8 %
Hakanen, Pertti	x	m	2015		
Pirttilahti, Arto		m	2015		
In total	7/16	3/16		18.8 %	35.2 %**

* *Pertti Salovaara was elected in 2003 from Helsinki*

** *The average percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.7. Satakunta

Satakunta was a small constituency that has eight seats in the parliament. There is one regional Centre party organization operating in the constituency. In the Satakunta constituency Centre's support has been close to Centre's national average results, in spite of the fact that more than 50 percent of the constituency's voters live in two cities, Rauma and Pori, where Centre's share of the votes is lower than country's average (in 2015 it was 12,7 percent in Pori and 13,5 percent in Rauma) (Statistics Finland). Table 13 below shows that there has not been a single female parliamentarian elected from Centre's list in Satakunta in 1991-2015 elections. Furthermore, while the number of female and male candidates has often been in balance, in most of the elections female candidates have not succeeded collecting votes in a corresponding proportion. In all elections, except for one in the 1991 election, the male candidates' proportion of the votes has been well above 70 percent.

Election	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Women %	Candidates %
1991	24.1	0.0	32.1	46.2
1995	20.9	0.0	15.5	35.7
1999	23.7	0.0	23.5	25.0
2003	28.1	0.0	21.3	42.9
2007	24.7	0.0	16.3	50.0
2011	16.1	0.0	11.9	25.0
2015	20.6	0.0	16.8	42.9

Table 13: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Satakunta constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Table 14 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from the Satakunta constituency starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. The penultimate column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column shows the percentage of female candidates on Centre party's list in the constituency.

Table 14: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Satakunta constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Juhantalo, Kauko		m	1991	0.0 %	46.2 %
Kalli, Timo	x	m	1991		
Korkeaoja, Juha	x	m	1991		
Juhantalo, Kauko		m	1995	0.0 %	35.7 %
Kalli, Timo		m	1995		
Korkeaoja, Juha		m	1995		
Kalli, Timo		m	1999	0.0 %	25.0 %
Korkeaoja, Juha		m	1999		

Juhantalo, Kauko		m	2003	0.0 %	42.9 %
Kalli, Timo		m	2003		
Korkeaoja, Juha		m	2003		
Kalli, Timo		m	2007	0.0 %	50.0 %
Kaltiokumpu, Oiva	x	m	2007		
Korkeaoja, Juha		m	2007		
Kalli, Timo		m	2011	0.0 %	25.0 %
Juhantalo, Kauko		m	2015	0.0 %	42.9 %
Kalli, Timo		m	2015		
In total	3/17	0/17		0.0 %	38.2 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

Table 14 shows that in addition to the striking male dominance, another characteristic for the constituency is persistence when it comes to the composition of elected group of parliamentarians. During the examined 26-year-period there have been only four Centre politicians who have been elected to represent Satakunta: Timo Kalli (7 terms), Kauko Juhantalo (4 terms), Juha Korkeaoja (5 terms) and Oiva Kaltiokumpu (1 term), newcomers' percentage of all elected parliamentarians was 17.6 percent.

4.8. Vaasa

Vaasa was a medium-sized constituency with 16 parliamentary seats in 2015, and includes two regional Centre Party organizations: Central Ostrobothnia region and South Ostrobothnia region. As Table 15 below shows, the Vaasa constituency is a strong area for Centre. Centre's share of the votes has been well above Centre's national average in all elections 1991-2015. Centre receives votes across the constituency, except for the Swedish-speaking areas and one of the two main cities, Vaasa, where Centre's share of the votes was 6.9% in the 2015 parliamentary election. However, in the constituency's other major city, Seinäjoki, Centre's support has been strong and varied between 24 percent at lowest and 33.8 percent at its highest between 1991-2015. (Statistics Finland) When it comes to the gender balance, the trend has been sliding backwards in the past few years. Table 15 shows that while in 1991 female candidates collected 36.7 percent of

Centre's votes, in 2015 women's proportion of votes had decreased to 19 percent. Furthermore, no female MP's have been elected from Centre's list in the most recent elections in the constituency. Finally, while the proportion of female candidates was increasing from 1991 until 2003, it has stagnated close to 30 percent after the peak at 47 percent in 2003.

Table 15: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Vaasa constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	33.9	33.3	36.7	33.3
1995	33.0	33.3	34.8	35.3
1999	31.7	33.3	36.5	37.5
2003	33.9	28.6	35.5	47.1
2007	32.5	33.3	22.7	29.4
2011	22.6	0.0	18.6	29.4
2015	27.4	0.0	19.0	31.3

Table 16 shows that for many years, about 2 out of 6 Centre parliamentarians from Vaasa were women. The Vaasa constituency has been also a home constituency for both Centre's both women leaders, and the only female Prime Ministers of Finland, Anneli Jäätteenmäki and Mari Kiviniemi. However, after the 2007 election there has not been a female parliamentarian elected from Vaasa. While women have struggled to become candidates and get elected in the past few elections, there have been several new male parliamentarians rising from the constituency. Altogether, during the examined elections, 14 out of 40 elected parliamentarians were newcomers, which makes 35 percent of all elected Centre parliamentarians.

Table 16: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Vaasa constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Aho, Esko		m	1991	33.3 %	33.3 %

Björkenheim, Rose-Marie	x	w	1991		
Jäätteenmäki, Anneli		w	1991		
Saari, Aapo		m	1991		
Vihriälä, Jukka		m	1991		
Virrankoski, Kyösti	x	m	1991		
Aho, Esko		m	1995	33.3 %	35.3 %
Jäätteenmäki, Anneli		w	1995		
Kiviniemi, Mari	x	w	1995		
Ranta-Muotio, Aulis	x	m	1995		
Saari, Aapo		m	1995		
Vihriälä, Jukka		m	1995		
Aho, Hannu	x	m	1999	33.3 %	37.5 %
Jäätteenmäki, Anneli		w	1999		
Kiviniemi, Mari		w	1999		
Lintilä, Mika	x	m	1999		
Ranta-Muotio, Aulis		m	1999		
Vihriälä, Jukka		m	1999		
Ahonen, Esko	x	m	2003	28.6 %	47.1 %
Haapoja, Susanna	x	w	2003		
Hautala, Lasse	x	m	2003		
Kiviniemi, Mari		w	2003		
Lintilä, Mika		m	2003		
Ranta-Muotio, Aulis		m	2003		
Vihriälä, Jukka		m	2003		
Ahonen, Esko		m	2007	33.3 %	29.4 %
Haapoja, Susanna		w	2007		
Lintilä, Mika		m	2007		
Mieto, Juha	x	m	2007		
Puumala, Tuomo	x	m	2007		
Sihto, Paula	x	w	2007		
Hautala, Lasse		m	2011	0.0 %	29.4 %

Lintilä, Mika		m	2011		
Puumala, Tuomo		m	2011		
Savola, Mikko	x	m	2011		
Hautala, Lasse		m	2015	0.0 %	31.3 %
Kurvinen, Antti	x	m	2015		
Lintilä, Mika		m	2015		
Puumala, Tuomo		m	2015		
Savola, Mikko		m	2015		
In total	14/40	10/40		25.0 %	34.8 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.9. Kymi

Kymi is a constituency that had 12 parliamentary seats in the 2011 election before it was merged with South Savo constituency. In the 2015 election, Kymi was part of the South-East Finland constituency. There are two Centre Party's regional organizations operating within the Kymi constituency's borders: Karelia Region and Kymenlaakso Region. Table 17 presents Centre's electoral results in the constituency, showing that in Centre's support has been close to the party's national average, except for the 2015 election, where Centre's percentage of votes was 16.6 in Kymi and 21.1 nationally. There are large variations in Centre's support within the constituency. The party has been strong in smaller municipalities and cities as well as in two main cities of Lappeenranta (21.8 % in 2015) and Kouvola (21.9% in 2015). However, it faces difficulty in one of the main cities Kotka (7.1 % in 2015), and also in Imatra (13.8% in 2015) (Statistics Finland). When it comes to gender balance, Kymi is clearly male dominated. As Table 17 shows, in the 1991-2015 period a female parliamentarian was elected only once, in 1991. Also, women have consistently gained fewer votes with respect to their proportion on the candidate list. When it comes to the candidate lists, they were balanced in 1991-2003, but the balance has vanished in the last three elections. When it comes to the women's share of the votes, the trend is downward from 1991 to 2011, until the development saw a change in the 2015 election.

Table 17: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Kymi constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	23.8	25.0	31.9	42.9
1995	18.9	0.0	29.6	45.5
1999	22.6	0.0	23.7	42.9
2003	25.8	0.0	14.5	50.0
2007	23.9	0.0	16.9	35.7
2011	16.8	0.0	10.1	35.7
2015	16.6*	0.0*	19.7*	30.0**

** In the 2015 election Kymi constituency was part of South-East Finland constituency. Numbers have been calculated by examining the support for Centre in 16 municipalities: Hamina, Iitti, Imatra, Kotka, Kouvola, Lappeenranta, Lemi, Luumäki, Miehikkälä, Parikkala, Pyhtää, Rautjärvi, Ruokolahti, Savitaipale, Taipalsaari and Vironlahti. See Appendix 5.*

*** In the 2015 election Kymi constituency was part of South-East Finland constituency. Candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appendix 2.*

Table 18 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from the Kymi constituency starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election, and whether the parliamentarian was elected for the first time or had previous parliamentary experience. The penultimate column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column the percentage of female candidates on Centre Party's list in the constituency. As Table 18 shows, there has been only one female parliamentarian elected from Centre's list during the examined years, Raili Puhakka in 1991, which makes 5 percent of all elected parliamentarians between in the 1991-2015 period. While there have been several new politicians rising from Kymi in the examined elections (altogether 40 percent of the elected parliamentarians have been new), there were no women among them.

Table 18: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female candidates and parliamentarians in Kymi constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Laukkanen, Markku	x	m	1991	25.0 %	42.9 %
Liikkanen, Raimo	x	m	1991		
Pesälä, Mikko		m	1991		
Puhakka, Raili	x	w	1991		
Liikkanen, Raimo		m	1995	0.0 %	45.5 %
Pesälä, Mikko		m	1995		
Lahtela, Seppo	x	m	1999	0.0 %	42.9 %
Laukkanen, Markku		m	1999		
Puhakka, Osmo	x	m	1999		
Lahtela, Seppo		m	2003	0.0 %	50.0 %
Laukkanen, Markku		m	2003		
Tiilikainen, Kimmo	x	m	2003		
Laukkanen, Markku		m	2007	0.0 %	35.7 %
Pakkanen, Markku	x	m	2007		
Tiilikainen, Kimmo		m	2007		
Tiilikainen, Kimmo		m	2011	0.0 %	35.7 %
Torniainen, Ari	x	m	2011		
Pakkanen, Markku		m	2015*	0.0 %*	30.0 %*
Tiilikainen, Kimmo		m	2015*		
Torniainen, Ari		m	2015*		
In total	8/20	1/20		5.0 %	40.4 %**

** In the 2015 election the Kymi constituency was part of the South-East Finland constituency. Parliamentarians and candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appedix 2.*

*** The average percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.10. Central Finland

With its ten parliamentary seats in the 2015 parliamentary election, the Central Finland constituency was the third smallest constituency in continental Finland. In the examined elections during the 1991-2015 period, Centre's election results have been constantly well above the national election result in the Central Finland constituency. In the constituency's main city, Jyväskylä, Centre has strengthened its position in the past elections, gaining 19.8 percent of the votes in 2015 (Statistics Finland). Table 19 below presents Centre's election results in Central Finland, the proportion of elected female MPs, the proportion of votes for female candidates as well as the proportion of female candidates on the party list. Table 19 shows that when it comes to gender balance, the trend has been positive in Central Finland. In 2015, the 50 percent of the elected MPs were women and 50 percent men. Furthermore, female candidates have had a significant role in gaining votes for Centre's list in Central Finland. Female candidates gained more than a 40 percent share of the votes in 4 out of 7 examined elections. Also, the candidate lists have been balanced apart from the 1995 and 2015 elections.

Table 19: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Central Finland constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	31.5	33.3	41.7	50.0
1995	25.6	33.3	23.6	35.7
1999	30.6	0.0	26.2	46.2
2003	34.9	25.0	35.9	50.0
2007	33.2	50.0	47.2	42.9
2011	21.8	66.7	55.7	57.1
2015	26.9	50.0	41.6	35.7

Introducing all elected Centre parliamentarians from Central Finland constituency, Table 20 shows that in the 1991 and 1995 elections one of the three elected parliamentarians was woman, Aino Suhola. After Suhola there was one

election when there was no female parliamentarian elected, but in 2003 Aila Paloniemi succeed in her campaign, and in 2007 she was followed by Anne Kalmari. Both parliamentarians seem to have a strong position, since they both succeeded in being re-elected in the difficult 2011 election. In Central Finland, Centre's parliamentarians have had long careers, and there is one parliamentarian, Mauri Pekkarinen, who has succeeded in being re-elected in every election in the 1991-2015 period. In the examined elections 1991-2015, there have been 25 Centre parliamentarians elected from Central Finland, out of whom seven, or 28 percent, have been new.

Table 20: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Central Finland constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Leppänen, Johannes	x	m	1991	33.3 %	50.0 %
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	1991		
Suhola, Aino	x	w	1991		
Leppänen, Johannes		m	1995	33.3 %	35.7 %
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	1995		
Suhola, Aino		w	1995		
Leppänen, Johannes		m	1999	0.0 %	46.2 %
Neittaanmäki, Petri	x	m	1999		
Oinonen, Lauri	x	m	1999		
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	1999		
Neittaanmäki, Petri		m	2003	25.0 %	50.0 %
Oinonen, Lauri		m	2003		
Paloniemi, Aila	x	w	2003		
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	2003		
Kalmari, Anne	x	w	2007	50.0 %	42.9 %
Oinonen, Lauri		m	2007		

Paloniemi, Aila		w	2007		
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	2007		
Kalmari, Anne		w	2011	66.7 %	57.1 %
Paloniemi, Aila		w	2011		
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	2011		
Honkonen, Petri	x	m	2015	50.0 %	35.7 %
Kalmari, Anne		w	2015		
Paloniemi, Aila		w	2015		
Pekkarinen, Mauri		m	2015		
In total		9/27		36.0 %	45.4 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.11. North Savo

Until 2011, North Savo was a constituency with two regional Centre party organisations, Ylä Savo region and Pohjois-Savo region. In 2011, the two party organizations were merged. North Savo is one of the four Eastern constituencies that went through a constituency reform in 2015. In the reform, the nine parliamentary seats strong constituency was merged with the North Karelia constituency becoming the Savo Karelia constituency. Table 21 below presents Centre's electoral results in North Savo constituency, the proportion of elected female MPs, the female candidates' share of the votes as well as the proportion of female candidates on the candidate list. Table 12 shows that North Savo has been a strong constituency for Centre throughout the examined elections. Looking at the municipal level results shows that this holds even in constituency's biggest city, Kuopio, where Centre's support was 26.5 percent in the 2015 election (Statistics Finland). In the 2015 election there was only one city in the whole constituency, Varkaus, where Centre gained less than 20 percent of the votes (Statistics Finland). Table 21 shows that while North Savo was a male dominated constituency in the early 1990's, this has changed over the past few years. In 2015, 50 percent of the candidates and 50 percent of the elected MPs were women and female candidates received 63.5 percent of the votes that were casted for Centre in North Savo.

Table 21 Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in North Savo constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Woman MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	37.3	20.0	33.7	38.5
1995	32.1	0.0	19.2	27.3
1999	35.7	25.0	23.1	15.4
2003	38.2	0.0	21.7	35.7
2007	35.8	50.0	44.9	50.0
2011	25.4	33.3	49.1	57.1
2015*	32.3*	50.0*	63.5*	50.0**

** In the 2015 election North Savo constituency was part of Savo Karelia constituency. Numbers have been calculated by examining the support for Centre in 19 municipalities: Iisalmi, Juankoski, Kaavi, Keitele, Kiuruvesi, Kuopio, Lapinlahti, Leppävirta, Pielavesi, Rautalampi, Rautavaara, Siilinjärvi, Sonkajärvi, Suonenjoki, Tervo, Tuusniemi, Varkaus, Vesanto, Vieremä. See Appendix 6.*

*** In the 2015 election North Savo constituency was part of Savo Karelia constituency. Candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appendix 3.*

Table 22 below presents all elected Centre Party MP's from the North Savo constituency starting from the 1991 parliamentary election until the 2015 parliamentary election. The second to last column shows the percentage of elected women, and the last column shows the percentage of female candidates on Centre party's list in the constituency. In the 1990's there was only one female parliamentarian, Mirja Ryyänen who managed to get elected from North Savo. The situation changed in 2007 when two new female parliamentarians, Elsi Katainen and Hannakaisa Heikkinen succeeded in rising into the parliament. At the same time with Katainen's and Heikkinen's break through, the number of female candidates rose, and since 2007 there has been over 50 percent female candidates on Centre's list in North Savo. Centre parliamentarians have had long

careers in North Savo, in the examined elections 7 out of 27 elected parliamentarians were new, which makes less than 26 percent.

Table 22: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in North Savo constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Huuhtanen Jorma		m	1991	20.0 %	38.5 %
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	1991		
Rossi, Markku	x	m	1991		
Ryynänen, Mirja		w	1991		
Röntynen, Kalle		m	1991		
Huuhtanen Jorma		m	1995	0.0 %	27.3 %
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	1995		
Lämsä, Eero	x	m	1995		
Huuhtanen Jorma		m	1999	25.0 %	15.4 %
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	1999		
Lämsä, Eero		m	1999		
Ryynänen, Mirja		w	1999		
Kettunen, Rauno	x	m	2003	0.0 %	35.7 %
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	2003		
Lämsä, Eero		m	2003		
Rossi, Markku		m	2003		
Heikkinen, Hanna-Kaisa	x	w	2007	50.0 %	50.0 %
Katainen, Elsi	x	w	2007		
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	2007		
Rossi, Markku		m	2007		
Katainen, Elsi		w	2011	33.3 %	57.1 %
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	2011		
Rossi, Markku		m	2011		

Heikkinen, Hanna-Kaisa		w	2015*	50.0 %*	55.6 %*
Katainen, Elsi		w	2015*		
Kääriäinen, Seppo		m	2015*		
Rossi, Markku		m	2015*		
In total		7/27		25.9 %	39.1 %**

** In the 2015 election North Savo constituency was part of Savo Karelia*

constituency. Parliamentarians and candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appedix 3.

*** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.12. North Karelia

Before the North Karelia constituency was merged with the North Savo in 2015, it was one of the smallest constituencies in continental Finland with six parliamentary seats. When it comes to the Centre Party, North Karelia is in many ways a similar constituency to North Savo: Centre's electoral results are constantly better in North Karelia than nationwide, and Centre is a major party even in the constituency's main city Joensuu, with 25,8 percent of the votes in the 2015 election (Statistics Finland). From a gender perspective, North Karelia has seen a positive development over the few past years. As Table 23 shows, Centre's candidate lists have been balanced since 2007 and so has the women's share of the votes and parliamentary seats.

Table 23: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in North Karelia constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Women %	Candidates %
1991	37.3	33.3	33.7	38.5
1995	32.1	50.0	19.2	27.3
1999	35.7	50.0	23.1	15.4
2003	38.2	0.0	21.7	35.7
2007	35.8	33.3	44.9	50.0

2011	25.4	50.0	49.1	57.1
2015*	32.9*	50.0*	44.0*	42.9*

** In the 2015 election North Karelia constituency was part of Savo Karelia constituency. Numbers have been calculated by examining the support for Centre in 19 municipalities: Ilomantsi, Joensuu, Juuka, Kitee, Kontiolahti, Outokumpu, Lieksa, Liperi, Nurmes, Polvijärvi, Rääkkylä, Tohmajärvi, Valtimo. See Appendix 7.*

*** In the 2015 election North Karelia constituency was part of Savo Karelia constituency. Candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appedix 3.*

Table 24 shows that there have been two to three Centre parliamentarians from North Karelia elected each examined election, at most one of them being a woman. Past elections it has been Anu Vehviläinen, the current Minister of Local Government and Public Reforms, who has been holding the seat. When it comes to person turnover in general, there has not been much of it: Anu Vehviläinen, Eero Reijonen, Hannu Hoskonen and Matti Väistö have been winning the seats in the past 20 years. In the examined elections there have been 17 Centre parliamentarians elected from North Karelia, out of whom 23.5 percent have been new.

Table 24: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in North Karelia constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Jokiniemi, Esko		m	1991	33.3 %	45.5 %
Ikonen-Graafmans, Tuula	x	w	1991		
Väistö, Matti		m	1991		
Vehviläinen, Anu	x	w	1995	50.0 %	28.6 %
Väistö, Matti		m	1995		
Vehviläinen, Anu		w	1999	50.0 %	28.6 %
Väistö, Matti		m	1999		
Hoskonen, Hannu	x	m	2003	0.0 %	50.0 %

Reijonen, Eero	x	m	2003		
Väistö, Matti		m	2003		
Hoskonen, Hannu		m	2007	33.3 %	42.9 %
Reijonen, Eero		m	2007		
Vehviläinen, Anu		w	2007		
Reijonen, Eero		m	2011	50.0 %	50.0 %
Vehviläinen, Anu		w	2011		
Hoskonen, Hannu		m	2015	50.0 %	42.9*%
Vehviläinen, Anu		w	2015		
In total		6/17		35.3 %	41.2 %**

** In the 2015 election North Savo constituency was part of Savo Karelia constituency.*

Parliamentarians and candidates have been allocated according to the previous constituency division. See Appedix 3.

*** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.13. Oulu

Bringing as much as nine parliamentarians to Centre Party's parliamentary group, the 18 parliamentary seats strong Oulu constituency is one of the most important constituencies for the party. The constituency covers areas of two regional Centre's party organizations: Kainuu and North Ostrobothnia. Table 25 below presents Centre's support in the constituency during the 1991-2015 period, the proportion of woman MPs, the share of the votes for female candidates, as well as the proportion of female candidates on the candidate list. Table 25 shows that Centre's support in Oulu has been strong throughout the elections. Furthermore, municipal level examination reveals that Centre is strong in both main cities of the constituency: Kajaani (33,6% in 2015) and Oulu (31,4% in 2015) (Statistics Finland). Oulu has been a constantly somewhat male dominated constituency, one in three candidates and elected parliamentarians being women. When it comes to the women's share of the votes, there is only one election, 2007, when women gained more than 40 percent of the votes. Even though the number of female candidates has increased in the past two elections, this has not managed to boost women's share of the votes.

Table 25: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Oulu constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Votes %	Candidates %
1991	46.8	22.0	30.0	33.3
1995	38.8	33.3	33.4	33.3
1999	43.5	33.3	34.3	33.3
2003	46.6	33.3	36.8	33.3
2007	43.1	33.3	42.6	33.3
2011	33.4	33.3	34.5	38.9
2015	42.7	33.3	27.3	38.9

Presenting all Centre's parliamentarians who have been elected in the parliamentary elections during the 1991-2015 period from Oulu constituency, Table 26 below shows that since the 1995 election, the proportion of female parliamentarians elected from the constituency has become stabilised to 33.3 percent. This has meant three out of nine candidates (or two out of six in 2011). The number of elected female candidates has not grown even though the proportion of female candidates has slightly increased in the past two elections. Table 26 also shows that while many Centre politicians from the constituency have made long parliamentary careers, there has been some turnover in the group of elected candidates, and new politicians rising from throughout the examined elections. In the seven examined elections altogether 30 percent of the elected candidates have been new.

Table 26: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Oulu constituency 1991-2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Alaranta, Juhani		m	1991	22.2 %	33.3 %
Heikkinen, Kauko		m	1991		

Isohookana-Asunmaa, Tytti		w	1991		
Kemppainen, Hannu		m	1991		
Koistinen, Annikki		w	1991		
Koski, Markku	x	m	1991		
Mattila, Kalevi		m	1991		
Saapunki, Pauli		m	1991		
Siuruainen, Eino		m	1991		
Alaranta, Juhani		m	1995	33.3 %	33.3 %
Isohookana-Asunmaa, Tytti		w	1995		
Karjula, Kyösti	x	m	1995		
Kemppainen, Hannu		m	1995		
Koistinen, Annikki		w	1995		
Koski, Markku		m	1995		
Myllyniemi, Kari	x	m	1995		
Saapunki, Pauli		m	1995		
Veteläinen, Maija-Liisa	x	w	1995		
Isohookana-Asunmaa, Tytti		w	1999	33.3 %	33,3 %
Karjula, Kyösti		m	1999		
Kerola, Inkeri	x	w	1999		
Keränen, Niilo	x	m	1999		
Lehtomäki, Paula	x	w	1999		
Myllyniemi, Kari		m	1999		
Rantakangas, Antti	x	m	1999		
Saapunki, Pauli		m	1999		
Vilkuna, Pekka	x	m	1999		
Hänninen, Tuomo	x	m	2003	33.3 %	33.3 %
Karjula, Kyösti		m	2003		
Kerola, Inkeri		w	2003		
Koski, Markku		m	2003		

Lehtomäki, Paula		w	2003		
Moilanen, Riikka	x	w	2003		
Rantakangas, Antti		m	2003		
Tölli, Tapani	x	m	2003		
Vilkuna, Pekka		m	2003		
Hänninen, Tuomo		m	2007	33.3 %	33.3 %
Karjula, Kyösti		m	2007		
Kerola, Inkeri		w	2007		
Korhonen, Timo	x	m	2007		
Lehtomäki, Paula		w	2007		
Rantakangas, Antti		m	2007		
Tölli, Tapani		m	2007		
Vehkaperä, Mirja	x	w	2007		
Vilkuna, Pekka		m	2007		
Kerola, Inkeri		w	2011	33.3 %	38.9 %
Korhonen, Timo V.		m	2011		
Rantakangas, Antti		m	2011		
Sipilä, Juha	x	m	2011		
Tölli, Tapani		m	2011		
Vehkaperä, Mirja		w	2011		
Jarva, Marisanna	x	w	2015	33.3 %	38.9 %
Keränen, Niilo		m	2015		
Korhonen, Timo V.		m	2015		
Parviainen, Ulla	x	w	2015		
Pylväs, Juha	x	m	2015		
Rantakangas, Antti		m	2015		
Sipilä, Juha		m	2015		
Tölli, Tapani		m	2015		
Vehkaperä, Mirja		w	2015		
In total	18/60	19/60		31.7 %	34.9 %*

* The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015

4.14. Lapland

Lapland is a constituency with two regional Centre Party organisations: Peräpohjola and Lappi. Table 27 below shows, that Finland's most Northern and smallest constituency, is the strongest constituency for Centre party. The party gained 42,9 percent of the constituency's votes in the 2015 parliamentary election, and got four out of the constituency's eight parliamentary seats. When it comes to gender balance, the state of affairs has fluctuated strongly in Lapland: in 1991 40 percent of the parliamentarians were women, in 1995 and 1999 25 percent. In the 2003 and 2007 elections, no female politician succeeded to get elected from Lapland and the women's share of the votes dropped close to 16 percent. As table 27 shows, the trend has switched in the past two elections. In 2015, 50 percent of the elected parliamentarians and 42.9 percent of the candidates were women, with female candidates collecting almost half of the votes.

Table 27: Support for Centre Party, proportion of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Lapland constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)

Election	Centre %	Women MPs %	Women %	Candidates %
1991	49.8	40.0	33.9	30.8
1995	39.1	25.0	32.9	29.4
1999	42.8	25.0	25.9	35.7
2003	44.8	0.0	16.4	28.6
2007	43.2	0.0	16.1	30.8
2011	32.2	33.3	40.9	42.9
2015	42.9	50.0	47.9	42.9

Presenting all elected Centre parliamentarians from Lapland in the 1991-2015 period, Table 27 shows that in 1991 two of the five Centre parliamentarians were women, in 1995 and 1999 one of four, after which there were two elections where no women were elected. In the 2011 election, Eeva Maria Maijala made a break through, and in 2015 she was accompanied by Katri Kulmuni. Table 28 also shows that while there has been continuity in the constituency's parliamentarians, there

has been newcomers making their way into the parliament at every election. In Lapland, new parliamentarians make 46.2 percent of all elected Centre parliamentarians in 1991-2015 elections.

Table 28: Elected Centre Party Parliamentarians and percentage of female parliamentarians and candidates in Lapland constituency 1991–2015

Name	New	Gender	Election	Elected	Candidates
Aula, Maria Kaisa,	x	w	1991	40.0 %	30.8 %
Korva, Timo	x	m	1991		
Näsi, Lasse	x	m	1991		
Pelttari, Seppo		m	1991		
Pokka, Hannele		w	1991		
Aula, Maria Kaisa		w	1995	25.0 %	29.4 %
Korteniemi, Ossi	x	m	1995		
Manninen, Hannes	x	m	1995		
Takkula, Hannu	x	m	1995		
Aula, Maria Kaisa		w	1999	25.0 %	35.7 %
Korteniemi, Ossi		m	1999		
Manninen, Hannes		m	1999		
Takkula, Hannu		m	1999		
Manninen, Hannes		m	2003	0.0 %	28.6 %
Rundgren, Simo	x	m	2003		
Takkula, Hannu		m	2003		
Manninen, Hannes		m	2007	0.0 %	30.8 %
Seurujärvi, Janne	x	m	2007		
Väyrynen, Paavo		m	2007		
Lohi, Markus	x	m	2011	33.3 %	42.9 %
Maijala, Eeva Maria	x	w	2011		
Rundgren, Simo		m	2011		
Kulmuni, Katri	x	w	2015	50.0 %	42.9 %
Kärnä, Mikko	x	m	2015		
Lohi, Markus		m	2015		

Maijala, Eeva Maria		w	2015		
In total	12/26	7/26		26.9 %	34.4 %*

** The average of the percentages of women on candidate lists 1991-2015*

4.15. Summary of quantitative data

The quantitative overview of the constituencies shows that there are substantial differences when it comes to gender parity of elected parliamentarians, as well as the share of the votes that female candidates have received for their party's list. Furthermore, constituencies differ when it comes to the turnover in the composition of the group of elected parliamentarians. Table 29 below is a summary of the data, presenting average support for Centre in each constituency, the proportion of female candidates on Centre's list, the women's proportion of Centre's votes, the proportion of elected female parliamentarians from Centre's list and the proportion of newcomers of all elected Centre parliamentarians in the constituency in parliamentary elections 1991-2015. It also presents the average of all constituencies on each matter. The constituencies are sorted based on the proportion of elected female parliamentarians.

Table 29: Average of Centre's electoral result (Centre %), proportion of female candidates (Candidates %), female candidate's share of Centre's votes (Votes %), proportion of elected female parliamentarians (Elected MPs %) and proportion of new parliamentarians (New %) in Finnish constituencies in parliamentary election 1991-2015.

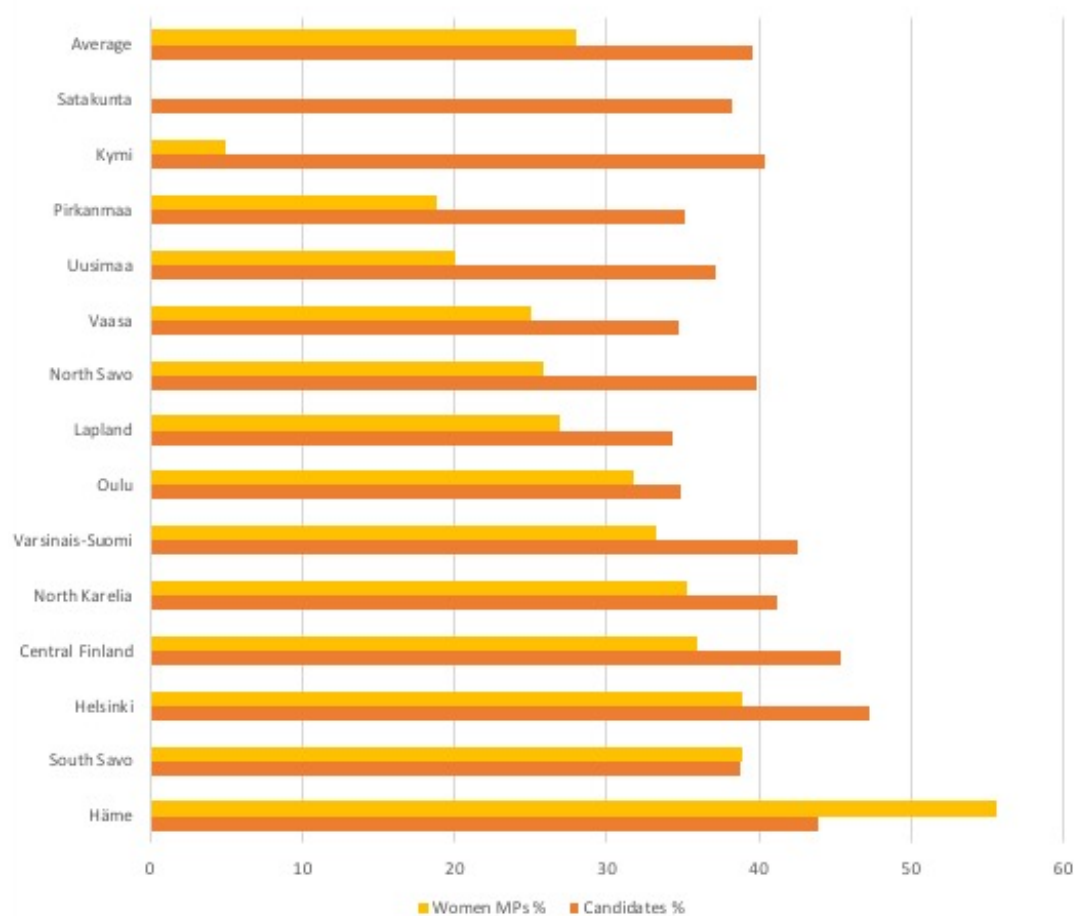
Constituency	Centre %	Candidates %	Votes %	Women MPs %	New %
Häme	17.2	43.9	56.7	55.6	22.2
South Savo	33.0	38.8	29.2	38.9	33.3
Helsinki	6.1	47.3	58.6	38.9	28.6
Central Finland	29.2	45.4	38.8	36.0	28.0
North Karelia	33.9	41.2	33.7	35.3	23.5
Varsinais-Suomi	16.6	42.6	38.2	33.3	38.1

Oulu	42.1	34.9	34.1	31.8	30.0
Lapland	42.1	34.4	30.6	26.9	46.2
North Savo	33.8	39.9	36.5	25.9	18.5
Vaasa	30.7	34.8	29.1	25.0	35.0
Uusimaa	10.6	37.1	29.2	20.0	40.0
Pirkanmaa	14.2	35.2	25.3	18.8	43.8
Kymi	21.2	40.4	20.9	5.0	40.0
Satakunta	22.6	38.2	19.6	0.0	17.6
Average	25.2	39.6	34.3	28.0	31.8

Table 29 shows that there is only one constituency, Häme, where at least 40 percent of the total number of parliamentarians elected in 1991-2015 have been women, although South Savo and Helsinki come close to the 40 percent bar with their 38.9 percent proportion of women. Then there is a group of constituencies, Central Finland, North Karelia, Varsinais-Suomi and Oulu where the proportion of women is above 30 percent but under 40 percent. Lapland, North Savo and Vaasa form a third group, in which the average proportion of women is at least 25 percent, but well under 30 percent. Uusimaa and Pirkanmaa are a pair with about 1 in 5 female parliamentarians. Finally, Kymi and Satakunta have exceptionally low proportions of female parliamentarians, five and zero percent of the all elected parliamentarians in 1991-2015 elections. If we look at the proportion of votes female candidates have received, Helsinki and Häme are the strongest constituencies, but the rest of the constituencies are grouped differently. Central Finland and Häme are a couple with 38 percent share of the votes for women, North Savo coming close to 37 percent and Oulu and North Karelia being close to 35 percent. In Lapland, Uusimaa and Vaasa women have collected, on average, 30 percent of the votes, in Pirkanmaa about 25 percent and, finally, in Kymi and Satakunta, the women's share of the votes has been 20 percent on average. Interestingly, in this summarizing table there seems not to be a clear connection between the proportion of female candidates and elected female parliamentarians. Figure 2 below illustrates this including same information as columns 3 and 5 in Table 29. As the figure shows, on average, most of the constituencies have had more than 36 percent female candidates. However, the

number of elected women varies strongly. For example, even though the Oulu constituency has had fewer female candidates than the Kymi constituency, there have been more women elected from Oulu. This is in contrast with the previous research that suggested that having more women on the candidate lists has led to more women in the Finnish parliament (Kuitunen 1997, pp. 47-48)(Giger et al, 2014).

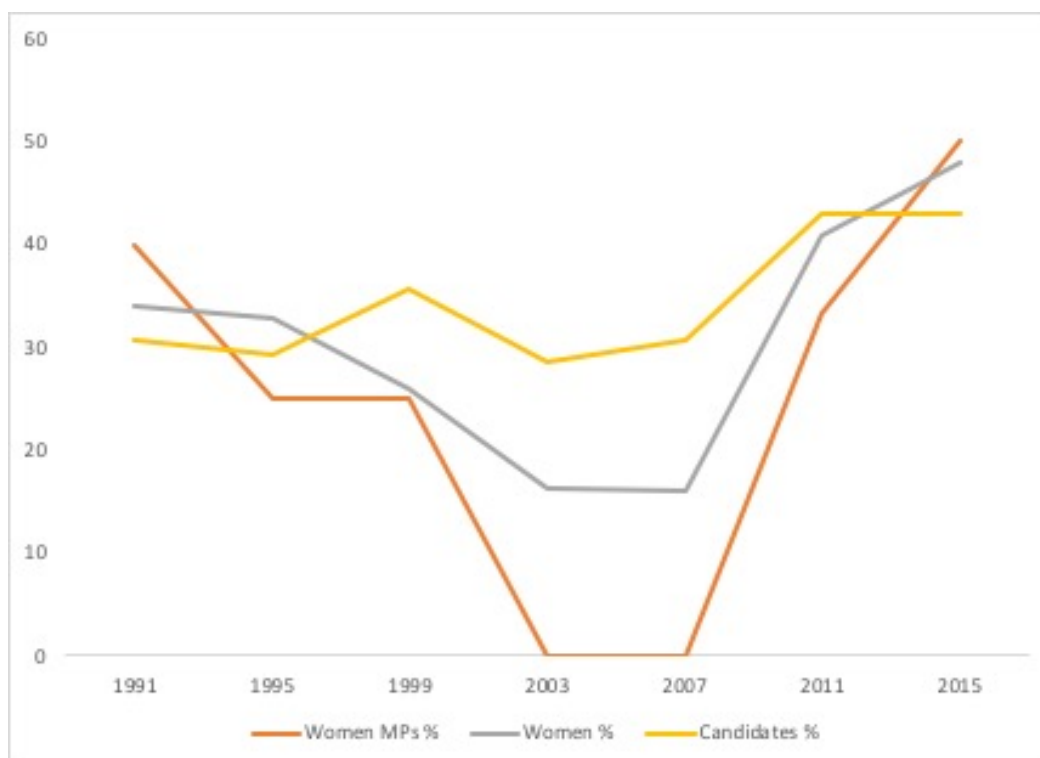
Figure 2: Average percentage the elected woman parliamentarians and average percentage of women on candidate list in different constituencies 1991-2015



Looking at the averages gives a misleading picture, however, since the individual examinations show that there have been differing trends in the constituencies when it comes to women's position. For example, Vaasa and North Savo look similar in the Table 29. Yet, studying the two cases from election to election reveals that the two constituencies have seen completely opposite trends in the past years, North Savo developing toward a gender balanced constituency, and Vaasa going in the opposite direction as the constituency has not seen a female

parliamentarian from the Centre Party since the 2007 election. Also, while Figure 2 shows no correlation when it comes to the number of female candidates and the number of elected female parliamentarians, many of the constituencies seem to follow this path. For example, looking at Lappi (Figure 3), we can see that when we follow the constituency's developments from election to election, the proportion of female parliamentarians and candidates seem to follow each other, and a similar path can be seen for example in Central Finland. In depth analysis of the correlation between the two factors, however, would require regression analysis.

Figure 3: Percentage of elected female parliamentarians, vote share for party's female candidates and proportion of female candidates in Lapland constituency 1991-2015 (Statistics Finland)



Based on the presented data this study continues to answer the research question by taking a closer look into three constituencies. Central Finland is chosen as an example of a gender balanced constituency, as it is a constituency that has seen a positive change over the past few elections (see chapter 4.10. Central Finland). Central Finland is chosen over South Savo as Central Finland is a bigger

constituency, and over Häme as there has been more newcomers elected in Central Finland. A middle range case study is the Oulu constituency where the state of affairs has been relatively persistent of male dominance over the examined elections (see chapter 4.13. Oulu). There are two regional party organisations within the constituency (North Ostrobothnia and Kainuu) but this study focuses on the bigger region, North Ostrobothnia only, and all the interviewees are from that area. Finally, the male dominated case constituency is Kymi that is chosen over Satakunta as there has been more turnover parliamentarians in Kymi, and this makes the constituency more representative as the fluctuation could have offered space for new female politicians (see Chapter 4.9. Kymi). The Kymi constituency includes two regional party organisations: Karelia and Kymenlaakso. As the two regions are about the same size, this study studies both regions.

5. Case Studies

Based on the interviewees with central party actors, former or current party employees, parliamentarians, former candidates and background influencers, this section explores how Centre party's candidate list takes its shape in Central Finland, Oulu and Kymi constituencies: who are main actors influencing it, and what kind of elements constitute a successful campaign and a good candidate in each constituency. The aim is to compare constituencies and analyse whether there are differences that could explain variance and trends in the proportion of elected female parliamentarians. While the three constituencies are picked based on the election results 1991-2015, the focus of the interviews shifts towards the latest developments and current situation. Interviews have been conducted in Finnish and the writer of this research has translated the quotations presented in this study. During the thematic analysis, six themes have been found relevant for comparison: process, influencers, criteria for ideal candidate, resources, election setting and supply of woman candidates. Findings are presented in the following section.

5.1. Candidate selection process in Kymi, Central Finland and Oulu

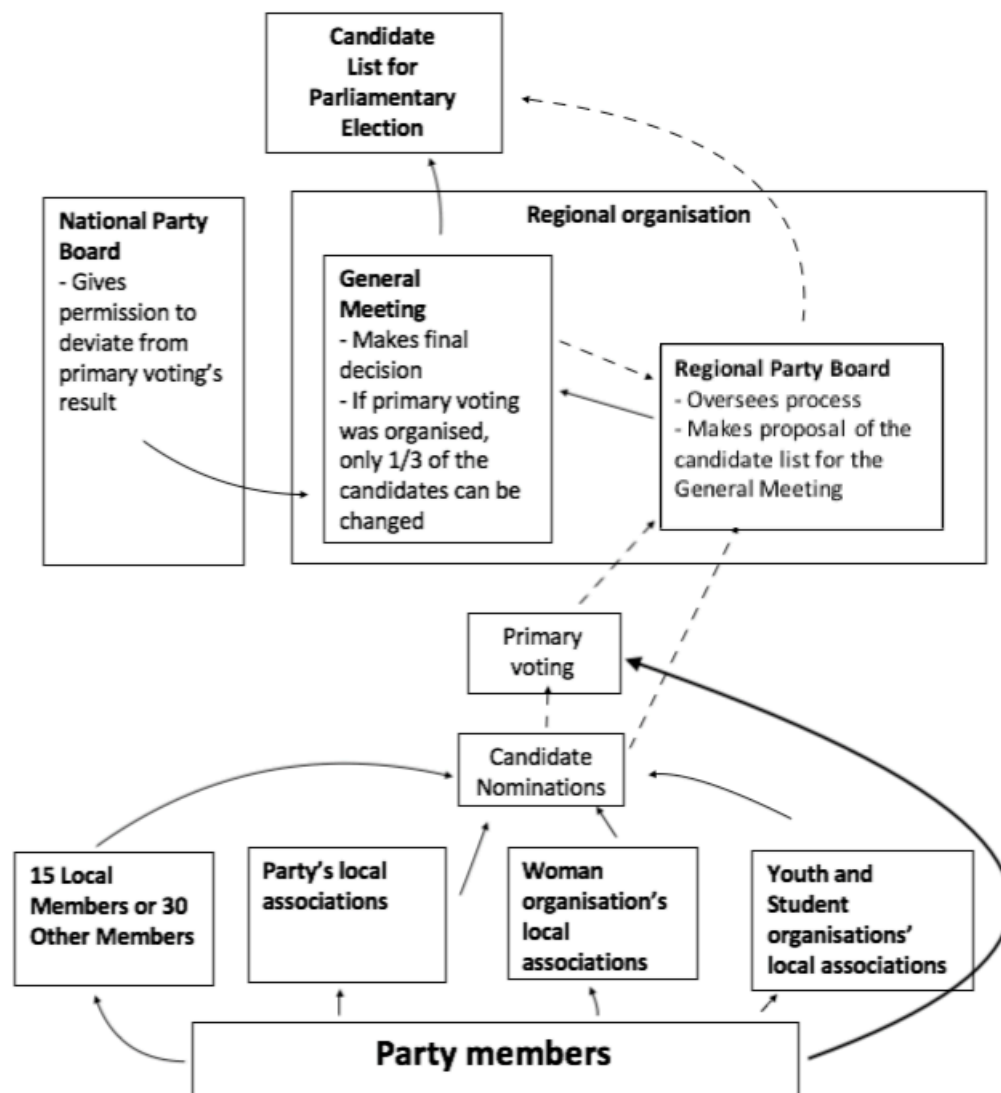
This chapter explains how Centre's candidates are selected in Kymi, Central Finland and Oulu constituencies. It starts by describing the formal rule-based nomination process that is the same in all constituencies, but notes that there are differences between the regions, for example when it comes to primary voting.

5.1.1. Formal nomination process

Formally, Centre party's regional party organisations all over the country follow same process when it comes to nominating candidates for parliamentary elections. This procedure is written in the party rules (Suomen Keskusta, pp. 12-13). In the formal procedure *local party associations and the regional party organisation* are the most central actors, but the *national party board* can guide them. If there are several regional party organisations in one constituency, they negotiate how candidate seats are distributed between the regions. According to the party rules allocation has to be based on Centre's support in the region in

previous election (Ibid, p. 13). Figure 4 below illustrates candidate selection process in a constituency with one regional centre party organisation.

Figure 4: Candidate Selection Process



According to the interviewees the formal process starts when the board of the regional party organisation sets a date until which the local party organisations can make proposals of candidates for a primary election (Kymi A, Kymi D, Central Finland A). Also, according to the rules, a group of 15 party members from the region or 30 other party members have the right to nominate candidates for primary voting. If more nominations are made than there are seats on the candidate list, regional party organisation has to organise a primary voting (Suomen Keskusta, p. 12). In the primary voting, region's Centre Party Members

can give a vote to their preferred candidate (Ibid). The candidates are then nominated according to the results of this voting (Ibid, p. 13). If the regional party organisation wants to make changes to the list that is formatted based on the primary voting, it needs to get approval from Centre party's national party board. If the permission is granted, region's general party meeting can change maximum 1/3 of the candidates on the list. (Ibid)

Regional party organisation's General Meeting makes the final decision of the list (Suomen Keskusta, p. 13). While the local party organisations have the right to propose candidates, *the board of the regional party organization* prepares the final proposal of the candidate list for the General Meeting (Oulu A). If there has not been primary voting within the region, the regional party board has more freedom to make its own proposal of the list for the General Meeting (Central Finland A). Further, if the local associations do not propose enough candidates in order to fill the candidate list, the regional party board or its election committee, as well as the executive manager of the regional party organisation have an important role in seeking candidates independently (Central Finland A, Kymi D). Sometimes the General Meeting votes about the list (Oulu A, Central Finland C, Kymi F). It is possible and common that the regional party meeting nominates candidates in parts, for example, it can nominate the first group of candidates in spring and the rest of the list in the autumn before the election. General Meeting can also delegate the decision of the whole list, but more commonly, a decision over some part of the list, to the board of the regional party organisation (Suomen Keskusta, pp. 12-13)(Central Finland A, Kymi E).

5.1.2. Primary voting

Constituencies have very different traditions when it comes to organising primary voting. According to the interviewees from Oulu constituency, there has been a long tradition of primary voting in North Ostrobothnia region whereas interviewees from both Kymi and Central Finland report that primaries have been rather unusual in their regions, and that the party actors are actually trying to avoid them in order to save money, or in order to avoid conflicts. (Central Finland A, Kymi H).

Interviewee: 'There is no primary voting coming up (this time), and it was a fortune that we do not need to waste region's money into that.' (Kymi H)

However in Kymi, both Karelia and Kymenlaakso regions organised primaries in the 2015 election as the constituency reform reduced number of candidate seats in the constituency. In the citation below, the interviewee points out that it is more difficult for the constituency to control formation of the candidate list if a primary voting takes place. The interviewee suggests that this is a problem as the party board is able to form a more balanced list than the list that is formatted according a primary voting.

Interviewee: '(...) one should never end up there (primary voting) as in the end it is good that the local associations suggest the candidates and during the half year candidate-seeking-process the regional party board and party office oversees it. I think it is a better system (...) although I criticised the geographical thinking before. But when we have to play with the five candidates, it is very challenging to find a balanced and good candidate list.' (Kymi A)

In Central Finland, there have been no primaries in the past years. According to one of the interviewees, local party actors have "avoided" primaries in purpose in Central Finland past years by bringing up their candidate proposals after the nomination deadline for primary voting has been passed. In the citation below the interviewee suggests that there have been bad experiences when it comes to primary voting in the region.

Interviewee: 'I assume that there has been a brutal primary voting some time, and that has left deep wounds, so that they want to avoid primaries to the end.' (Central Finland A)

While primaries have been rather a rule than an exception in North Ostrobothnia region, interviewees suggest that primary voting has led to mixed results. On one hand interviewees see primary voting as an act of member democracy that can indent local party actives to campaign for their local candidate, but on the other hand, primary voting makes candidate list distorted as it tends to favour candidates from small municipalities with many party members, whereas candidates from region's main city Oulu, where most of the voters live, struggle to get enough votes to succeed in primaries. (Oulu A, Oulu C, Oulu D) Thus, when there has been a region wide primary voting in North Ostrobothnia, region's party board has often asked for permission to change some of the elected candidates in order to get more candidates from main city to the list (Oulu A). Interviewees' experience is, however, that making changes to primary voting's result has not been unproblematic. In the citation below one of the interviewees explains how Center actives in the area that's candidate is dropped down from the list may lose its interest in campaigning.

'It often somehow devitalizes (the local party actors), if let say a candidate has got 700-800 votes in the primary voting and this candidate is dropped off the electoral list and replaced with someone who has got 250 primary votes, so the municipality that loses its candidate can become demotivated in the coming electoral campaigning.' (Oulu A)

To avoid these problems the North Ostrobothnia region introduced a new decentralised model for selecting candidates. According to the interviewees this system was used in at least in 2011 and 2015 elections. (Oulu, A and Oulu, C) In the new system candidate seats were allocated to different areas within the region, 'bottomlands' (Finnish 'jokilaakso') as they are called, and each area had their own process that they followed when choosing candidates. Later, each bottomland proposed their own choice of candidates to party's regional party board. Some of the bottomlands arrived to an agreement by negotiations while others organised local primaries (Oulu, A). For example, in one of the bottomlands (Iijokilaakso) Kuusamo city's municipal party organisation first organised a primary voting between three candidates, and then the most popular candidate

attended bottomland-wide primary voting, in which the bottomland's two final candidates were selected (Oulu, D).

Region's target is that each bottomland follows 40:60 gender quotas in their nominations, but according to interviewees this is difficult to ensure in practice during the decentralised nomination process. For example, if a bottomland can nominate three candidates, usually two of them are men, one woman. Thus, many of the interviewees note that while gender balance is one of the targets for the list formation and gender equality is discussed in party board and the general meeting, the concern often only appears in speeches but does not become reality as the region does not effectively control that it is realised in the decentralised decision-making process. (Oulu, A, Oulu, C, Oulu, D) In the citation below one of the interviewees explains how targets that are set for candidate lists are not systematically implemented.

Interviewer: 'I was thinking that what are the region's... does the region have certain goals for the list?'

Interviewee: 'It's always defined that half and half, and then at some point we satisfy that a little bit more than 30 percent women... and then one says that now we will take more young candidates, and then we barely get one young there.' (Oulu, D)

5.1.3. Objectives for candidate list

All regional organisations seek for a group of candidates that would bring Centre Party the best possible electoral result in the constituency. According to the interviewees goal is to form a diverse list, which means that it covers constituency's different corners regionally and includes candidates with diverse professional backgrounds and all ages and genders. Based on the interviews, all regions share very similar objectives for candidate list. In the quotations below an interviewee describe objectives in his/her constituency.

Interviewee: '(...) usually there has been the principle that there needs to be enough percentage of *women, young, different professions* and, of course,

from *different parts of the region*, these have been at least those general principles (...)’ (Central Finland, B)

According to the interviewees these objectives can be in conflict with each other. Sometimes, for example the target of a gender-balanced list requires compromising with the other targets such as having candidates who have distinctive political or professional profiles. Different regions and different party actors balance between these targets differently. In the quotation interviewee from Central Finland prioritises gender balanced list over regionally balanced list.

‘Interviewee: (...) Candidates (Name 1), (Name 2) and (Name 3), were all from the same part of the region. And in that situation, why we “needed” to take both (Name 1) to the list and (Name 2, with the same professional profile), was because we had so few women... So that I think there are two main goals when forming the list: first of all, that we would have gender balance approximately in place (...) and the other goal, that is another main goal, is that there would be regionally balanced division in the group.’ (Central Finland A)

On the other hand, in the Oulu constituency, where the candidate recruitment and list formation process is highly decentralized, having a regionally balanced list has been a starting point for the whole process where candidate seats have been allocated to each bottomland.

In Kymi some interviewees questioned whether this kind of before-hand set criteria for a balanced list gives the best possible electoral result. An interviewee (Kymi A) calls for more flexible criteria, both when it comes to candidates’ gender and locality. Her/his argument is it is problematic that various targets for the composition of the list (number of young candidates, gender balance, region and profession) leave little room for other considerations, and this may leave some strong candidates outside of the list, only because there is another candidate with similar profile already on the list.

Interviewee: 'Then, when we talk about the need to have one young candidate, and half women, half men, even this thinking is difficult for our region with five candidates at this stage. In the old constituency we had seven candidates, and if one half of the candidate seats were already allocated for women, and another half for men, then the seven candidates is difficult to mathematically put on evenly. (...) Six is such a small number that this (quota) system does not necessarily raise the best candidates (...) sometimes we should callously choose five women if we have five good women, and leave the men aside. And then, of course, sometimes vice versa. But as we are now talking about increasing women's candidacy, so if sometimes there are many good women available, then we should dare to choose many of them on the list. Then comes the problem of whether they dare run if they are many.' (Kymi A)

In three out of eight interviews, party actors from Kymi constituency either question whether a higher percentage of women on the candidate list is a good target in a first place or note that it is probably not optimal to have too many female candidates on the list, if the aim is to get a female candidate elected to the parliament (Kymi A, Kymi E, Kymi F). The argument presented to support this point of view is that female candidates are rivals with each other because they all have same 'female profile'. According to this argumentation having many female candidates on the list splits women's votes and in the end none of them is elected. In the quotation below interviewee from Kymi constituency presents this idea.

Interviewer: 'Well, what do you think of the fact that, as we know, there has not been female parliamentarians from Kymi district, and Centre's Karelia and Kymenlaakso regions, but also, I do not know if this is common knowledge, there has been a declining trend when it comes to the number of female candidates since the early 1990's...'

Interviewee: 'I still do not buy that. If we look at the electoral result this (number of female candidates) might correlate with the proportion of the votes women receive, but it (fewer female candidates) leaves space that

someone like Elsi Katainen, Anu Vehviläinen or Riikka Manner could be born.'

Interviewer: 'What do you mean by *space*?'

Interviewee: 'So, that the scarcity of female candidates, it is not necessarily such a... it can help someone to actually get elected. That in a way... it is not the first concern. A bigger concern is if there are no *potential* female candidates.' (Kymi E)

While many of the interviewees from different regions question strict criteria for candidates when it comes to, for example, the geographical aspect (even though it is stressed as a central criteria), the above expressed concern that there would be too many women on the list, does not similarly emerge in other two constituencies. If questioning gender balanced candidate lists is indeed more common in Karelia and Kymenlaakso than in other researched regions, this could partly explain why the number of female candidates has declined in the constituency.

5.2. Influencers

In order to understand candidate recruitment process, it is necessary to know which instances exercise power in different regions, namely, the rule-based candidate nomination process is in each constituency accompanied with numerous informal negotiations and conversations that all influence the formation of a candidate list. While all constituencies have same rules that give local associations and general meeting key roles in the formal process, in practice it is a whole different story to become Centre's candidate in Oulu constituency than in Kymi constituency.

In Oulu constituency where Centre party has strongest party organisation with many party members, local party associations and the municipal organisations have central role in the process. According to the interviewees the list formation process starts from local level where active party members such as chairperson of the municipal organisation start thinking of the potential candidates and

discussing them. (Oulu A, Oulu B, Oulu C, Oulu D) Regional party board, chairperson of the regional party organisation and executive manager of the regional organisation follow this part of the process aside, discussing potential candidates with the local party actives in order to oversee that candidate list becomes balanced. It is the local associations and actives, however, that choose their own candidate and start promoting this person. While many of the members in the regional party board might have their personal favourite among the candidates, often from their own area, as a whole, interviewees see party board as a relatively impartial actor that attempts to oversee the bigger picture (Oulu, A, Oulu, C and Oulu, D). A somewhat discussed topic in North Ostrobothnia is region's chairperson's role if she or he decides to run for parliament (Oulu, B, Oulu, D). According to one of the interviewees, that kind of position weakens chairperson's possibilities to influence the nomination process and candidate names (Oulu, B). The two citations below show how two of the interviewees from Oulu constituency answered the question of the most influential actors in their region.

Interviewer: 'Who do you think are the most important actors that exercise most power influencing Centre's candidate list in North Ostrobothnia? '

Interviewee: 'Important moment is when the local associations start looking for candidates, if the candidate does not rise at that point, the game might be over. And then next important moment is in the primaries where the member base of largest municipalities exercise power.' (Oulu, D)

Interviewee: 'Well, it is of course on the municipal level – it starts from there. Over here it is largely so that the municipal organisations have power, or it is the local association that make nominations, but on the municipal level decisions kind of... it starts from there and then, of course, if it goes to the primaries the list is based on the result of the primaries, but of course the general meeting then has the capacity to make changes.' (Oulu, A)

It is worth noting that on the local level it is not necessarily the people in formal positions within the party organisation who are most influential in the local nomination process. Instead, the most influential actors can be for example experienced party members who have a candidate who they want to get on the list. In this case these 'old hands' use their networks and start seeking for support for the candidate from the municipal organisation among all, as well as from the neighbour municipalities. (Oulu, C, Oulu, B) In addition to the geography, other networks matter. For example, an influential network in North Ostrobothnia are Conservative Laestadians, a large religious group in the region, that has lifted its own candidates on the list. (Oulu, A, Oulu, D) Further, Centre's regional Youth organisation has influence when it comes to rising young candidates (Oulu, C).

In Kymi and Central Finland Centre's local associations and municipal organisations do not seem to have as structured role in the process as in Oulu. Instead, regional organisation's role is emphasized more than in Oulu. While local associations make formal candidate nominations, all interviewees from Kymi and Central Finland highlight that candidates and their support groups have the most central role in the process on local level. In Kymi, interviewees describe that local party actors have a central role in list formation process when they have interest to do so, but many of the local associations are passive (Kymi F, Kymi D). Therefore, the process is more often lead by individuals rather than associations, and it is most often the local supporters of certain candidates who influence the process on a local level, not the municipal organisations per se (Kymi A, Kymi G, Kymi H). In Kymi, many of the interviewees noted that in addition to promoting their own candidate, support groups sometimes do counter campaigning, aiming to block competitors (Kymi A, Kymi B, Kymi D, Kymi G). In the citations below three interviewees from Kymi analyse central influencers in the list formation process.

Interviewer: 'Who you think influences this process where the candidate list is formatted and potential candidates are recruited? Who are the instances that have most power and can make decisions?'

Interviewee: 'Well, the party board of the region, of course, has the formal power, and there are some people who are rather strong influencers, but then, to be honest, other candidates are strong influencers, certainly, because they try look for their own position and make calculations that no other candidate would rise from certain area or with a certain profile. Candidates' support groups exercise silent power of course trying to influence region's operations. Yeah, it is this inner circle.' (Kymi, A)

Interviewee: 'Well, of course, local party actors influence if they want their own candidate and get organised behind this person, in that case, yes, they have power. But if we have a situation where we are think about the primary voting, let say we have five seats on the list and there are 6-7 nominations, then the regional party board discusses with the candidates and their supporters if it is worth it organising a primary vote, or if the situation could be resolved by negotiations. But yes, it depends greatly on the local level and candidates' support groups what their action is.' (Kymi D)

Interviewee: 'We have not needed to do real recruitment in the parliamentary election as the candidates have arisen over the years (...) In municipal election someone can become a candidate so that she or he has contacted us the same week candidate lists are left, but parliamentary elections are different in nature. It rises there... the nominations come from local associations and the list has been formed based on that.' (...)

Interviewer: 'So if I have understood right the local associations are most central actors in formatting the candidate list?'

Interviewee: 'The most important actors are of course the candidates. It cannot be like... that input and output, at first, for example that woman who wants to go to parliament needs to take on a huge endeavour, that is the starting point and most important thing. And the local association is the actor that just makes the formal nomination.' (Kymi, E)

What is characteristic for interviews from Kymi, is that some of the interviewees in both regions strongly criticize regional organisations for being partial in relation to different candidates. According to the critique, members of regional party board, and even the actives of the regional women's organisation, often campaign for region's one or two sitting (male) parliamentarians, and this influences region's electioneering more broadly. (Kymi B, Kymi C, Kymi D, Kymi G). This kind of criticism is particularly strong in one of the two regions.

Interviewer: 'What do you think, as a region, do you think the regional organisation can be neutral in a situation where almost all centre actives are active in someone's support group in the election and so on?'

Interviewee: 'No, it cannot. Last time 90 percent of the regional party board were behind (Name, an incumbent), even the chairperson of the regional woman's organisation, which is quite... But I do not... on one hand I understand it in some extent, but of course it should not be like that. And it harms the electioneering, especially for the executive manager, as he or she is alone and cannot carry through all things when they (board members) are all behind one candidate. But that is how it has always been.' (Kymi, D)

Interviewee: 'The whole of our organisation is an electoral organisation for (Name, an incumbent), and these geezers have been bequeathing these votes always when the previous parliamentarian has been stepping down (...) And these men have taken care that in important positions there are men who support them, and there is no room for any woman, except for those women who say 'yeah, yeah, yes, yes' ... so that in my opinion, these Centre organisations are not impartial, they have been seized and occupied by these people.' (Kymi, B)

This experience of party organisation being partial can influence candidate's willingness to run for a second time, like one of the interviewees explains in the quotation below. The interview is not specified in order to protect interviewees personality.

Interviewer: 'So, do I understand right that you were not ready to do all that work that a parliament seat would have required?'

Interviewee: 'I would have been ready but I was not willing to finance another campaign alone. And I had the feeling that I did not receive enough support from the party. The party wanted to support certain candidates, for example (Name, an incumbent) in a completely different way than the other candidates. I am not bitter, I understand that he was in the parliament, but you could sense that there were the top candidates and I was not one of them, so I felt that I don't want to spend my money on this (...) they maybe wanted to use me in order to gain certain votes that the party would not otherwise receive from this area and these votes were not enough to get me into the parliament.'

Interviewer: 'Tell me what kind of concrete things made you feel that the party did not support you?'

Interviewee: 'Well, when you just listened people and talked to them in those election events you could notice that they had chosen that it was usually (Name, the incumbent) who was the first candidate. They praised my campaign and said that I was a good candidate but indicated that I was not their first candidate (...) and you could see the financing, Centre here... the support for campaign funding was miserable if you wanted to make a proper campaign, you couldn't buy a single newspaper advertisement with it.' (Kymi)

In one of the two regions, two interviewees stress the role of executive manager and other employees. According to them, the regional organisation has been fractioned and different factions support some politicians and criticise others (Kymi, F and Kymi, G). Also, one of the interviewees criticises that the regional party board, supporters of an incumbent and executive manager of the board try to influence candidate nominations beforehand to ensure that there would not be primary voting, or even so that certain candidates would not get into the list (Kymi G). What is worth noting, though, is that party rules secure that local associations can make nominations independently from the regional party elite. In the citation

below, the interviewee criticises that Regional organisation has habits that are undemocratic.

Interviewer: 'Tell me who are the most important actors when centre's candidate list is formatted in the region?'

Interviewee: 'Of course leading of the regional organisation, the executive manager and the chairperson. But of course, at least formally, the whole regional party board has a role. And then there are, of course, wild cards (actors that make their own nominations without consulting the board) (...) They (regional party elite) do not want candidates who do not come in certain shape, and they have always wanted to avoid primaries (...) I think this is serious manipulation, I think the ideal situation would be that members can choose (...) but usually they try to prune the nominations beforehand so that they can say that we do not need primaries'

Interviewer: 'Tell me, how do they prune the candidate nominees in practise?'

Interviewee: 'If a person, who has a couple of friends, wants person x to become a candidate, they need to find a local association that nominates this person. Now, if this is torpedoed, so that the grapevine, or phone in practice, takes care that there is no local association that makes the nomination. This is done systematically in order to make sure that no one is nominating this person and this is done before hand. After this, this person x cannot make his/her way to the list.'

(...)

Interviewer: 'So, these people are something like board members and people like that who then...?'

Interviewee: 'Yes, and I assume some supporters of (Name, an incumbent), I do not know.'

Interviewer: 'What do you think, what role does the regional party board have in this process?'

Interviewee: 'Well, of course, there are people from all municipalities in the regional party board, some stronger personalities than others. I am sure there are board members who have a lot of power, but things are

settled already before board meetings. I believe that the executive manager of the region has a significant role in how the things go (...) in practice the executive manager is a prominent influencer, leader of the people and an opinion leader for sure.' (Kymi, G)

This view is, however, not supported by all interviewees from the region. While it is not contested that the region is willing to avoid primary voting, one of the interviewees highlights that sufficient member democracy can be achieved by voting in the general meeting (Kymi H). In the quotation below, the same interviewee claim that while pruning nominations was probably the case earlier, it has not been common in recent years.

Interviewer: 'Can you recall any cases where there would have been friction because there was more than one potential candidate from the same area?'

Interviewee: 'Well yeah, I do not remember now... Had it been so that they would have negotiated about it in early stage so that I do not have knowledge about it? Now, we have not had any negotiations like that with any candidate where we would have suggested that she or he would not run. Now, we have not had that kind of conversations by no means.

Interviewer: 'Do you know about that kind of negotiations that would have taken place in previous years?'

Interviewee: 'I remember talking to an ex-chairperson of the region who said that when they had those kinds of conversations they sometimes told to a candidate that 'if you do not run this time, we'll reserve a place for you next time', but this was a long time ago when they made these kinds of agreements. In that way they made sure that there were not two candidates from the same region. But I think our democratic system where the general meeting assures that the list becomes good has worked well.' (Kymi, H)

Similarly to Kymi, in Central Finland interviewees stress the role of the regional party board, the chairperson of the board and the executive manager in the list

formatting process – to the extent that the party board sometimes receives a mandate to nominate part of the candidates independently. In the citation below an interviewee answers question as to who are the central influencers forming the candidate list in the region.

Interviewee: 'It is the regional party board, of course.... so that it is not like... While the rules precisely allow proposals from local associations and so on, bottom up thinking, the situation is like... that we willingly avoid the primary voting and pretty readily make the decision in the General Meeting that in order to ease the process we, for example, nominate 10 candidates in the general meeting and give a mandate to the party board to nominate the remaining four candidates.' (Central Finland, A)

Furthermore, interviewees from Central Finland highlight candidates and their supporters as central influencers. What differs Kymi and Central Finland is that in Central Finland the regional Centre Party organisation does not receive similar criticism as an actor. While one of the interviewees mentions that the executive manager of the region and chairperson of the region may have personal favourites among the candidates (Central Finland B), none of the interviewees suggests that for an example regional party board would prefer one or two candidates. What comes up in one of the interviews, however, is that many of the party actors have their preferences when it comes to candidates. Therefore, they might not be actively recruiting candidates who could potentially threaten their or their favourite candidate's position (Central Finland A, Central Finland C). In the citation below one interviewee describes how a candidate's supporters might influence the process by trying to bring down other candidates who may have a similar professional background or who comes from the same area.

Interviewee: 'Before, the woman organisation especially, had these local influencers who were close to one candidate (...) they were talkative ramblers who could sometimes even brazenly dare to influence. This was back in the days. Nowadays it is a struggle to fill the candidate lists and

influencing means much more smooth arrangements in which some people become candidates by just saying that they will run (...) And the rest comes... you can almost say, just to fill the list (...) In a way that if it is possible to make a candidate more believable by bringing down another candidate who is their worst rival. That kind of influencing that does not happen in general meetings.’ (Central Finland C)

The interviewee believes, however, that this kind of influencing cannot stop the most potential candidates, meaning those candidates who have potential to get elected (Central Finland C). Instead, the idea is to influence those who are the ‘filling candidates’, and ensure that they do not compete with a preferred candidate.

Interviewee: ‘Here in Central Finland one can say that those who seriously want to become candidates, they get onto the list. No one can influence those, like, real candidates. But the rest of the candidate group can be influenced more, by trying to encourage a candidate that would threaten one’s own favourite candidate less. This kind of things happen a little, but it is quite smooth and correct process nowadays. It has changed a lot compared to how it was some decades ago.’ (Central Finland, C)

Previous research has contradictory views on the role of political women’s organisations for promoting equality in Finland. While Jaana Kuusipalo (2011) stresses their role, Miki Caul Kittilsson suggests that women’s organisations have not had that predominant role in Finland, instead Finnish female politicians have avoided becoming ‘isolationist’ within their parties. In the interview material women’s organisation is rarely named among the important influencers in the candidate selection process. However, in Central Finland interviewees suggest that individual strong female actors from women’s organisation and/or women’s organisation have had a predominant role looking after gender equality, at least historically. In the citations below an interviewee from Central Finland highlights the woman organisation’s role, while noting that it might have been discriminatory toward some women.

Interviewee: 'Decades ago it was so that in different parts of the constituency local women started thinking that 'this woman from our area is our chance to get out own parliamentarian elected, let's make her a parliament member'. Often this kind of strategy led to the situation where other good female candidates did not receive similar support. The idea was to get a woman from a certain area elected. The positive side was that this woman received a strong position as a candidate and she did not have competitors from the same area.' (Central Finland C)

Another interviewee from Central Finland mentioned an influential female actor who has influenced in the region throughout the years.

Interviewee: 'After the early 90's we have had, a chairperson of the regional woman's organisation that time, Leila Lindell, who later became chairperson of the regional party organisation, she is a real pro-equality-person and she has made sure that even before we have started talking about candidate recruitment there has been 40% women target written down.' (Central Finland, A)

While Mrs. Lindell and other women are rising up as important influencers, the interviewee claims that gender equality is widely accepted as a norm in the region.

Interviewee: 'I have never heard in Central Finland that someone would have said something aloud when Leila Lindell has proposed at least 40 or 50 percent women, I have never heard someone say anything or groan afterwards about the target. So that this target is taken seriously here and men were as sad as women last election that we did not manage to get enough female candidates.' (Central Finland, A)

However, it seems that in some cases the women's organisation has been so strong that an interviewee suggests that some male politicians might have felt discriminated.

Interviewee: 'In Central Finland there is a party's regional organisation and then a separate women's organisation. Women are participating in the party's regional organisation normally, and also in the women's organisation, similarly to the young people. And that has some importance.'

Interviewer: 'In what way?'

Interviewee: 'It has in the way that women and young people are present in all official happenings that the party organises and in addition they organise their own events that are intended only for women, and young people organise their own events inviting only young candidates. Not always, but this is the norm. I think it is good and it should be like this.'

Interviewer: 'Do you feel like that men are discriminated?'

Interviewee: 'Well, I do not feel but some might feel that way. And sometimes it might have been like that a potential man in an area has felt that there is discrimination (...) that the man has felt that it is more important what the regional women's organisation says than what the local party organisation thinks. There are some cases like this, and a couple of them have been more serious.' (Central Finland, C)

In Kymi and Oulu many of the interviewees criticize women's organisation for various reasons. In Oulu interviewees suggest that regional women's organisation's role is to remind local associations about gender balance and equality issues on certain occasions, such as before candidate nominations, but otherwise women's organisation are criticised for doing too little in order to increase equality (Oulu A, Oulu C, Oulu D). Some interviewees even suggest that it might be counterproductive for equality if women have their separate organisations (Oulu A, Oulu B, Oulu C), that is to say Kittilsson's theory receives support. One interviewee remembers that in previously some municipalities had a system where each local association had a candidate quota. As the women's association had its own quota for female candidates, the party's other local associations mainly nominated men, and as the local associations could suggest more candidates than the women's association, candidate lists for municipal

elections become male-dominated (Oulu A). In the citation below another interviewee suggested that on the local level, it could be beneficial for equality if women and men act within the same organisations.

Interviewer: 'Why do you think there has been more female candidates in your municipality and women have held important positions?'

Interviewee: 'I think it does have some importance that there are many women on the board of our local association, that has certainly had significance. We might think about the candidate list more and the gender balance is taken as a starting point and that holds. And also, maybe women notice if women are missing from the list.' (Oulu, B)

In Kymi, interviewees criticize the regions' women's organisations for various reasons. In one of the two regions, interviewees give mixed descriptions of the regions women's organisation. On one hand it is portrayed as being weak, as it did not have its own finances for many years and many women in the region have decided to not to be members in the women's organisation at all, but have their membership in one of the party's local associations instead of the women's associations. (Kymi E, Kymi G, Kymi F) According to one of the interviewees women do not often campaign for female candidates (Kymi, E). On the other hand, one interviewee claims that the women's organisation has, indeed, had a predominant role when it comes to making decisions over female candidates in parliamentary elections (Kymi G). In the quotation below an interviewee explains that seeking a female candidate has often been delegated to the regional women's organisation. However, she/he questions whether it is the best way to find strong female candidates.

Interviewee: 'In our constituency getting into the candidate list often required that you are the one, chosen person, who has been selected to become a candidate by the regional women's organisation. Searching for female candidates was very much left to the regional women's organisation (...) there have been strong women with a lot of political power leading the women's organisation and even leading the regional

party organisation, but they have been taking care that no-one threatens their position. I was often left wondering whether it is the Centre Women's 'woman number one' who is able to attract votes from men and from other parties (...) it was often automatic that the chairperson of the women's organisation was asked to run, she had like, deserved, the candidacy.' (Kymi G)

In the second Kymi region, many interviewees barely mention the women's organisation. One former female candidate mentions that she was supported by the local women's organisation in the election. The citation below is not specified in order to avoid indicating interviewee's identity.

'Women's organisation tried to take me forward, it was the same in the whole this area. They raised me up in those events, and I suppose they spoke for me and I believe I received votes from Centre women.' (Kymi)

However, a more recent candidate's experience is not as positive, and it seems that it is not clear that the women's organization supports female candidates in any specific way with their campaigns. In the quotation below an interviewee describes a case where the women's organisation was not comfortable organising an event for female candidates and voters, as they were worried about discriminating male candidates.

Interviewee: 'The discussion within the women's organisation was like that 'we cannot do something like this where the male candidates would be excluded' (...) the culture is like that no one helps the female candidate but they are more concerned whether men are being discriminated.'
(Kymi)

5.4. Ideal Candidate

The existing theory presented in Chapter 2 suggests that the demand and supply of political candidates is gendered partly due to the expectations that people have for female and male candidates. In order to see if this can explain differences

between the constituencies, interviewees were asked about the characteristics of a good candidate in order to see if they differ in different constituencies. Based on the interviewees it seems that party actors from different constituencies share similar views in this matter: a good candidate is an empathetic person who is good at meeting people, has strong networks in the constituency and has stamina to run several times.

Interviewee: 'Some sort of charisma would be needed. The voter should feel herself a better person after meeting the candidate. The candidate should satisfy some needs that the voter has, after all, this is marketing.'
(Kymi F)

Interviewee: 'I think you should be able to talk to people about their very difficult and personal concerns with a low threshold. You have to be able to sense those goals and wishes that people have and how they could be carried on through politics.' (Central Finland, B)

However, standards in Oulu constituency stand out somewhat differently compared with Central Finland and Kymi. In Oulu, a candidate's experience from municipal politics and activities within the party organisation seem to have more predominate role in building the candidate's credibility. This can be due to the high level of competition within the region, and the primary voting that means that in Oulu candidates need to convince a large group of party actives in order to succeed in primaries. In the quotation below, an interviewee from the Oulu constituency describes the party's hard internal competition in North Ostrobothnia region.

Interviewee: 'Yes, my feeling is that in our region it is difficult to become a candidate if one has not been heavily involved with party activities or municipal politics before. This is a strong area for Centre, and there are plenty of active party members and a few candidate seats, so in a way the question is that how many seats are we willing to give *outsiders*. In the coming provincial election, we decided to reserve some seats that the

regional party board can fill, and partly the idea was that the regional party board could select candidates that are diverse enough and maybe somewhat different.’ (Oulu C)

In Central Finland, and especially in Kymi, interviewees emphasise more that it is important that the candidate is well known among the wider public and has strong networks outside of the party, many even note that it is important that people across party lines can vote for the candidate. (Kymi A, Kymi D, Kymi E, Kymi F, Kymi G, Kymi H, Central Finland A, Central Finland B)

5.5. Resources

In an open list electoral system such as the Finnish system, candidates have a bigger responsibility for their own campaigns compared with a party centred with closed lists. Therefore, getting elected requires much more than getting candidate’s name on the list. A candidate needs resources such as money, time, fame, supporters and knowledge in order to run a successful campaign. In the quotation below an interviewee stresses the role that a good support group has in the campaign.

Interviewee: ‘There have been these candidates that have had a strong will to become a parliamentarian, but they have not understood what it requires, it requires the campaign makers (...) these people the regional organisation recruit (...) these people do not even have a support group, or it is a small gang that fusses around a little bit. The party actives are already in someone’s support group. These candidates might have potential but the starting point for the campaign is damn bad. That’s why it is not enough that you are interested in becoming a parliamentarian, you always need to have these people who do the job, praise you everywhere and can say that you will get five votes from our family, this kind of thing.’ (Kymi, G)

As the quotation above illustrates, that in addition to having a good candidate, a successful campaign needs a hard-working support group, knowledge about

campaigning and campaign financing. Some of the interviewees note that these two factors are intertwined: a broad support group can help candidate with fund raising by selling campaign products and lotteries (Central Finland A, Central Finland C). More important than the size of the support group seems to be its commitment to the candidate and the campaign. Many of the interviewees who had experiences of running successful campaigns as campaign workers or candidates spoke about a small but committed support group (Oulu D, Central Finland B, Kymi B, Kymi D). Again, we can see a difference between the Oulu constituency where the local and municipal party organisations seem to have a bigger role in financing campaigns and offering a support group base for the local candidate. In the quotations below interviewees describe how candidates find resources for their campaigns in Oulu highlighting the role of the municipal organisations. The second citation is not specified in order to avoid indicating the interviewee's identity.

Interviewee: 'In our region the candidates have very strong support groups (...) they are formed largely regionally so that there is the certain number of... we have a strong organizational base and in a way it eases forming the support group... when a candidate is selected from a certain municipality there is a strong Centre-lead municipality and many party members so that it is easy to start forming the support group.' (Oulu, A)

'Interviewee: 'A woman's campaigning budget consists of many small donations but for me the donation from my own municipal organization was important, and also another municipal organization from there made a small donation.' (Oulu)

While the importance of receiving support from a candidate's home area and the local Centre organization is highlighted in all interviews from Oulu, in the quotation below an interviewee notes that the core of the support group is not necessarily large. The interviewees are not singled out here in order to protect their anonymity and avoid revealing which of them have been candidates.

Interviewee: 'So, I had a core group of 6-7 people with whom we planned, organized and tried to do fund raising. But then I had a broader citizens delegation, about a hundred people, who were indented to the campaign by signing their names on a supporter list.' (Oulu)

In addition to a local support base, some candidates from Oulu have other significant networks. According to the interviewees especially the most successful candidates receive votes all over the constituency meaning that they have networks outside of their own area. Also, Conservative Laestadian candidates often have strong networks even outside of their own home region. (Oulu, A, Oulu, B)

In Central Finland and Kymi candidates and their support groups are clearly more independent from party structures than in Oulu. Instead of the official structures, support groups are constructed around the candidates or steered by leading figures. In the quotation below a candidate from Kymi describes how her support group was formed informally consisting mainly of family and independent Centre Party members.

Interviewee: 'I have my completely own support group that has nothing to do with the Centre Party, there are many party members in it but none of them have joined official way (through the municipal organization for an example) (...) I have got support from my family, my husband, my siblings, my husband's family and then there are many Centre Party Members who support me.' (Kymi)

In the citations below two candidates/parliamentarians from Central Finland describe that their support groups were formed informally, through personal networks.

Interviewer: 'Where did this first support group come from?'

Interviewee: 'My acquaintances who I had known for years, professionally and as a municipal politician. Yeah, they were from here, and of course

there was quite large group from (City name, candidate's home town), good friends who I had there, and individual supporters from other municipalities. It was not a very large group in numbers, but they were very energetic and smart, I have always had smart friends! So that it was very fun to do the campaign and we all got very excited about it. It is important that people can see that the support group is excited and that they have trust in the candidate.' (Central Finland)

Interviewee: 'It is of course good that in the beginning that you have a group of people around you that puts the message forward and talks about the candidate in their environment with the idea that 'now, let's do this, this person is good, let's get on-board.' Some decades ago support groups were bigger and you would keep in touch with them with letters, that was very heavy.'

Interviewer: 'Where did your support group come from, who were they?'

Interviewee: 'All around the constituency, different age groups. Friends, and I have been a quite visible person since I was young, so that's where this group has formed.' (Central Finland)

Having a support group is central for a successful campaign, but it is not self-evident that a candidate succeeds forming one. Based on the interviewees, it seems that a newcomer can find herself also in a situation where there are no supporters available. This problem is taken up especially by the interviewees from Kymi. This kind of situation is described in the quotation below. Interview is not specified in order to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

Interviewer: 'How did you start organising your campaign, how did you know how you should do it?'

Interviewee: 'This friend of ours knew how to do a campaign as he was working in an advertising agency, and this local support group consisted of (home municipality)'s Centre party members, or actually the chairperson of the municipal organization, who actually did not really have that much time for my campaign either, and then my own family,

parents and a couple of people I knew (...) but that was the problem, I did not have broad enough support group who... I had a feeling that when we went to these election events many thought that it was good that I was a candidate but my problem was that I was the second-best candidate for many, but when people have one vote only you need to be the best candidate.' (Kymi)

What happens to the support group when a parliamentarian decides to step down? This is a moment where new strong candidates are born, at least in Kymi. Based on the interviews it seems that there are some background influencers who have been central actors behind several parliamentarians, and sometimes these influencers seek a new candidate that they could support, or a candidate can be active herself/himself and ask for support. These influencers are important as they are able to gather people behind their favourite candidate, and this can be a crucial factor explaining why certain candidates have succeeded getting elected. For example, in the quotation below one of the interviewees from Kymi explains how a parliamentarian (person A) after stepping down, gave his support to a person (person B) who had previously supported A, and this person was then elected to the parliament. As the quotation illustrates, the decision to support someone can have its roots long in history and even in family relations.

Interviewee: 'They were looking for a candidate from A's support group, and since A was no longer running you could see that B would get elected, he had been active for a long time, and he had kennel people and hunter associations supporting him, and he got A's supporters behind him.'

(...)

Interviewee: 'B would still sit in the parliament if he would have not switched party later, A's supporters would have kept him there (...) B's father had already been A's supporter.' (Kymi D)

A similar story of an influential supporter and family relations is described in the following quote. In the quotation the parliamentarian is person C, and an influential supporter person D.

Interviewee: 'I think C's secret is that he is from a main city and that gives him a good support base. He is like 'our man' (...)'

Interviewer: 'How did C become 'our man'?'

Interviewee: 'His father-in-law was this D, who was for a long time a leading politician in the city, and previously raised and supported (NAME 1, former parliamentarian) and after him (NAME 2, former parliamentarian). So, this D who was a very nice man, he was an important supporter for several parliamentarians (...) and then I understood that D chose C, nevertheless, he was D's daughter's husband. And there is this basic group of people that, when they are told that this person is the number one candidate, we all vote for him in order to get our own parliamentarian from this area, then they vote for him. That it is you know... that kind of traditional Centre Party junta. 'Let's make C a parliamentarian.' This is my opinion. (...)

Interviewee: C's strength is also that he has been active in sports since he was young, he has this strong reference group, he has been organizing (Event, area's important sport event) and that kind of thing.' (Kymi G)

In these two cases influential supporters have helped put forward male candidates, but in Central Finland the situation has been opposite. According to the interviewees the former editor of Keski-Suomalainen newspaper, Erkki Laatikainen, was an influential supporter behind many successful female politicians helping them with campaign financing as well as promoting them in his articles. (Central Finland A, Central Finland B)

5.6. Electoral Setting

A central factor that makes the three compared constituencies different from each other, is their electoral setting. While every election is different, factors such as the number of elected parliamentarians, Centre's support in the constituency, and turnover of parliamentarians shape the campaigning environment in constituencies. Previous research suggests that higher district magnitude decreases men's and increases women's same-gender voting, increasing support

for female candidates. (Giger et al 2014). Giger et al argue for their hypothesis by suggesting that if women are considered 'less likely to be successful in small districts, then preference votes for them would be perceived as "wasted" even by women with a preference to be represented by a same-gender candidate' (Giger et al, 2014, p. 307). In their article Giger et al also test a hypothesis of political competition, suggesting that high political competition between parties produces strategic considerations about not 'wasting' one's vote. Their hypothesis is that 'voters are expected to side with candidates with high chances to win, rather than wasting their vote on candidates less likely to be elected, who in many cases are female' (Ibid). This hypothesis, however, does not receive support in the multivariate model analysis. (Giger et al, 2014)

Based on the interviews, a central question is intra party competition. Is there real competition between candidates, or if it is clear that the incumbents are going to be re-elected? If a few candidates have strong position, there is an obvious risk that a vote will be 'wasted' if it is casted to a new candidate. In Oulu interviewees suggest that following the party's hard internal competition the most difficult part in North Ostrobothnia region is to become a candidate in the first place (Oulu A, Oulu B, Oulu C). At the same time internal competition ensures that all candidates have support among party members and they are therefore able to make good campaigns. This means that while some candidates, such as incumbents, have a stronger position than others, almost all candidates campaign seriously receiving a high share of votes. As the party organisation is strong in North Ostrobothnia, and candidates rise from their home region, united support from candidates' home municipality and surrounding municipalities can be a crucial source for a successful campaign (Oulu A, Oulu D). A candidate's good results are, of course, intertwined with the party's support in the region that is higher than in the two other regions. In the quotation below interviewee from the region describes the setting in North Ostrobothnia.

Interviewee: 'Everyone who becomes a candidate here runs a ruthless election campaign (...) We don't have so called *filler candidates* (Finnish: täyte-ehdokas) if you use this term, it is an ugly word... but those people

who are on the list, basically everyone of them has a chance to get elected.’ (Oulu, A)

In Central Finland interviewees have differing opinions when it comes to the number of ‘filler candidates’, but interviewees admit that there are some on the list. One of the interviewees say that 5-7 of the 14 candidates are ‘real candidates’, another interviewee suggests that there were two ‘filler candidates’ in the 2015 election. In the quotation below one of the interviewees is asked about the role of the filler candidates. As the quotation demonstrates, the idea with ‘filler candidates’ is to attract voters from certain areas or with a specific professional background. While these candidates might not run strongest campaigns, they bring in voters who might otherwise choose their candidate from another party.

Interviewer: ‘Would it not be beneficial for the party that every candidate would be really fighting to get elected?’

Interviewee: ‘Yeah, that is the goal but then there are questions such as age, gender, profession and regionalism, when we look at those factors we notice that “hey, there is no candidate from Eastern Central Finland and this person would be willing to run, well, she might not have political future and we are not sure if she can organize a campaign but as there is no candidate from this area, let’s take her”.’ (Central Finland, A)

What is interesting in Central Finland is that, compared with Kymi, incumbents have often lost their seat in elections. While Mauri Pekkarinen, Aila Paloniemi and Anne Kalmari have succeeded in having long careers, during the examined time period Aino Suhola, Johannes Leppänen, Petri Neittaanmäki and Lauri Oinonen have lost their seats in the parliament through an election defeat. One of the interviewees reasons that this might have resulted from having 1-2 very popular candidates (Pekkarinen and past years also Kalmari) who collect a lot of votes. The interviewee reasons that this could be one of the reasons behind the phenomenon where incumbents have lost their seats, since the order of the candidates who have received the third, fourth or fifth highest number of votes, is by small margins. The interviewee suggests that this in turn can encourage new candidates

and their supporters to put more effort into their campaigns, which in turn revitalises the party's campaigning in the constituency. (Central Finland C)

In order to see if there are indications that this hypothesis receives support, election results for each constituency in the latest elections (2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015) were examined candidate by candidate (Appendix 10). The examination focused on looking at how strong the campaigns of those people who were not elected to the parliament were, and counting the unsuccessful candidates who received at least half of the number of votes than the last elected parliamentarian received. I argue that this is a "good result" as the candidate has a good chance to get elected if she succeeds in doubling her votes in the next election. In addition, 'promising results' were examined, including candidates who received one third of the votes of the parliamentarian who was elected with the smallest number of votes. The result was that in Oulu most of the remaining candidates (67-89 percent) were within in the 'good result' group, and nearly all (89-92 percent) at least within the 'promising result' category. In Central Finland the situation was not as encouraging though, 18-60 percent of the remaining candidates fitted into the first group, 36-80 percent within the second. In Kymi election results were weakest for unelected candidates, only 17-36 percent of the candidates represented the first category and 18-64 percent at least 'promising result' group. What was even more striking with results in Kymi was that that during the researched period of time (2003-2015), only one candidate who had a 'good result' was a woman, Anniina Peltola in 2015. (Appendix 10) It is important to note that compared with Oulu and Central Finland, Centre's support and share of the votes is lower in the Kymi constituency. This can be an important factor explaining why it is more difficult for all Centre's candidates to attract votes in Kymi. It does not, however, explain differences between male and female candidates.

Going back to the electoral setting, in the Kymi constituency the Centre Party is divided into two separate regions that select candidates and run election campaigning largely separate from each other. According to the interviewees, candidates receive most of their votes from their own region. In a way this

separation into two regions divides the constituency in two smaller areas where each region receives zero to three parliamentarians in the Parliament, two to four in total. In 2015 one of Centre's three parliamentarians, Markku Pakkanen, is from Kymenlaakso, and two parliamentarians, Kimmo Tiilikainen and Ari Torniainen, are from Karelia. Interviews indicate that having two separate regions within the constituency causes an election setting where Centre Party regions are somewhat concerned about getting their 'own' candidate elected (Kymi A, Kymi B, Kymi D). Namely, if there are three candidates from Kymenlaakso who receive the most votes on the list, Karelia will be left without a Centre parliamentarian for four years and vice versa. According to the interviewees incumbents have had a strong position within their regions but there have been a few cases where incumbents have not been re-elected. The constituency's only female parliamentarian Raili Puhakka failed to get re-elected in 1995 and so did Markku Laukkanen. In 2011 both incumbents, Markku Pakkanen and Markku Laukkanen both from Kymenlaakso, lost their seats when Centre faced a historic election defeat nationwide.

The previous research suggests that district magnitude is a central factor explaining gender-based voting, and therefore also women's parliamentary representation. Based on this research, however, it seems that district magnitude is a more nuanced question. According to interviewed Centre Party actors it is not enough to consider whether a parliamentarian comes from a particular constituency, but if she/he comes from the right regional organisation, or even from the right area within a region. This is stressed in the chapter Therefore, even though the party would offer both female and male candidates in the constituency, in reality voters and party actives might have fewer options if they want to vote for a candidate who comes from a certain geographical area.

Kymi is the only constituency where many interviewees criticise that the election setting as being settled in the constituency by most of the Centre actives supporting one of the incumbents. This was partly discussed earlier in the analysis about regional party organisations as actors (chapter 5.1.5.) and campaigning resources (chapter 5.5.). When it comes to top-candidates and filler candidates,

interviewees have contradicting views. Interviewees criticise that it is not the goal of the regional party elite that candidate lists become as strong as possible but, instead, to ensure that the right politicians become elected (Kymi B, Kymi G). Interviewees in leading positions within the two regions assure that this is not the case, and the regions are truly aiming to form the best possible candidate list. In this study the sample of interviewees is so small that it is not possible to verify who is right, but based on the researched data it seems that it is indeed difficult for a new candidate to get elected from Karelia or Kymenlaakso if none of the regions' incumbents voluntarily steps down. In 2011 when both Kymenlaakso's parliamentarians lost their seats, it was not because someone from their home region would have gained more votes than the two incumbents but because a new parliamentarian arose from the Karelia region receiving more votes than the two parliamentarians from Kymenlaakso, and at the same time the Centre Party lost a seat in the constituency. When we look at the number of candidates having 'good' or 'promising' election results, during the 2003–2015 period, the tightest competition among candidates took place in 2007. That was the election where an incumbent, Seppo Lahtela was no longer a candidate for the Centre party. In the quotation below one of the interviewees describes how the electoral setting changed when an incumbent (person A) was stepping down.

Interviewee: 'A announced that he is not going to run for parliament and in that moment one seat was genuinely opened (...) then my father told me for the first time there is one seat available, you are not starting that far behind, and I was like that 'yes'. A's supporters of course had to look for a new candidate and I got new supporters from there because I knew some of them.' (Kymi)

5.7. Why fewer women?

According to Norris and Lovenduski (1995) the supply of candidates is formed, first of all, by resources that are available for the aspirants (time, money, experience) and secondly by the aspirants' motivation (ambition, interest, drive) to seek political positions. Based on the interviews it seems that supply of female candidates is a problem for the Centre Party. Regardless of the constituency,

interviewees seem to agree that it is more difficult for Centre in their region to recruit female candidates than male candidates. This is the case even in Central Finland. Interviewees from all constituencies suggest that the root cause is that women lack political ambition or self-confidence in comparison to men (Kymi A, Kymi D, Kymi E, Central Finland A, Oulu A, Oulu C). Also, according to nearly all of the interviewees, women are more concerned about combining politics with family. While childcare is provided for local politicians during their meetings, according to some of the interviewees not all potential candidates know about it (Oulu B, Central Finland A). Furthermore, official meetings are only a small part of the time that municipal politics require. Parliament in turn does not provide any special child care for politicians. In the quotation below an interviewee reflects over the question of combining politics with family.

Interviewee: '(...) it is always this 'but I am not suitable for that', and I have always encouraged many women to take leading positions but there is always this question of time, when you have got a family and you don't have time. It is interesting that this is a problem for women only, even though men have families as well (...) but of course if you have a family, your partner's support is very important. It is important that the husband understands. There is this dimension as well that if you have got a husband who does not accept that the Mrs is getting ahead in her career, then it (political career) is doomed to fail. You need to have a mentally strong partner who can handle the situation. And then of course, you need a social network for childcare and so on.' (Kymi D)

There were also politicians among the interviewees who themselves had decided to set politics aside, partly because of family. In the quotation below one of the interviewees mentions that her family was the she quit politics, despite the fact that her husband was supportive. Quotation is not singled out in order to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

Interviewee: 'After the election campaign (parliamentary election) when the municipal election came, my elder children asked if I always needed to

leave home when they came back from school. And then I started thinking. I had promised to be a candidate in the municipal election but I did not campaign at all because I was thinking that people remember me from the parliamentary election and if they want, they vote for me (...) But it was a conscious choice that actually I didn't want to be a candidate at all as I wanted to make my children's wish come true that I would be at home in the evenings, the city council works so that the meetings are in the evenings and you are away from home a lot.' (Kymi)

Interviewees from different constituencies share the same view that it is more difficult to find female candidates and that women would need more courage in order to succeed in politics. While some interviewees from North Ostrobothnia and Central Finland mention that some women lack the necessary political stamina, Kymi stands out in that sense that all interviewees highlight the importance of perseverance, noting that there are not many female candidates who would have run several times in the constituency. Many of the interviewees therefore draw the conclusion that women lack the determination needed to become a parliamentarian. While most of the interviewees raise up the fact that women do not run several times, it seems that regional organisations and party actors have not reflected why it is so. The first quotation below is not specific to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

Interviewer: 'Have you like tried to find out why it is like this? Why women do not run a second time? Is it just that they do not have determination or is there something that should be examined in your course of action as a region?'

Interviewee: 'I am sure there is something in our course of action that should be examined, and when I was elected to the parliament for the first time I organized an event where I invited all the other candidates and we sat down, had coffee and talked, this kind of therapy you should do.'
(Kymi)

In the quotation below, an interviewee starts by answering the question of how candidates can keep their support groups motivated if they haven't been elected for the first time, and they know that it might require several elections before the candidate gets elected.

Interviewee: '(...) you just need to keep the group close and somehow motivate them. I think it is this lack of perseverance that has been the women's problem here. Really, (NAME, incumbent) is a good example of that, it was his third election when he was elected. Second time he got 5000 votes but was not elected. It is a demonstration of hard work.'

Interviewer: 'I am wondering where does it come from that women lack perseverance...? But (NAME, incumbent) he got a good result already in first election?'

Interviewee: 'Yeah, 3500 votes.'

Interviewer: 'I mean, that was already a very encouraging result. Can the lack of perseverance result from the fact that most women have had quite a bad first election result, and that the result does not encourage perseverance?'

Interviewee: 'No, yeah, you are right, that must be a big factor. They notice that there is no space and decide to do something else.' (Kymi D)

Former female candidates from the constituency also suggest that unsuccessful first campaigns might be the reason behind lacking stamina. This is how one interviewee describes her own considerations. The quotation below is not specific to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

Interviewee: 'I received quite good number of votes but I counted that I would have needed to triple my votes in the next election to be sure that I would be elected (...) and that was very much. You might have been able to do that a second time but it was rather uncertain. And the campaign was so expensive that I figured out that I can use that money in my current work and in developing our (business) and that is why I made that decision.' (Kymi)

There are some interviewees however who have a different perspective. According to one interviewee from Kymi, the main problem is that the regional Centre organisation is unable to find potential female candidates.

Interviewer: 'When I have been going through the election results it seems that there has been no woman who has has a promising election result during this time period, no woman has been even close to getting elected.'

Interviewee: 'No, there hasn't.'

Interviewer: 'What do you think, why it is so? Is it so that a) potential women have not run or b) they have run bad campaigns? There have been 30 % female candidates in the end.'

Interviewee: 'Candidates have been bad. They have not even asked the kind of women to become candidates who I think might have had potential to get through. Female candidates have always been easy choices that women's organisation have decided to support without thinking or analysing too much. They haven't had this kind of deeper understanding and analysis on what kind of candidate they are looking for and they have not had expertise to run campaigns, campaigns have been pretty awful. (Kymi, G)

When it comes to party actor's attitudes on equality, it seems that interviewees from the same constituency have differing views. Based on the interviewees it is likely that women who become active in the Centre party are welcomed differently on the local level depending on the municipality in which they live. Interviewees from all constituencies can give examples of female politicians who have had conflicts with their local male or female party fellows in the constituency, while on the other hand they also claim that there are women in leading positions in municipal politics in all constituencies. (Oulu A, Oulu B, Oulu C, Oulu D, Central Finland A, Kymi A, Kymi B, Kymi D, Kymi E, Kymi F, Kymi G, Kymi H) What is common to all regions, is the lack of systematic strategy for increasing equality.

Regional women's organisations are widely criticized for not doing this effectively (Oulu A, Oulu, B, Oulu C, Kymi B, Kymi D, Kymi F, Kymi G).

6 Discussion

The Finnish Centre Party is one of the least balanced political parties in Finland when it comes to the proportion of female parliamentarians. There are, however, great regional differences. This case study has explored the list formation processes and practises in three different constituencies. Based on the case studies the main finding of this study is that while all Centre Party organisations have the same formal rules, list formation processes, regional practises and electoral settings are different in all of them. In this chapter, findings of this study will be discussed.

A major factor that all the researched constituencies have in common is the lack of female candidates, and many of the interviewees complain that, in comparison to men, women lack political ambition. This is a problem in municipal elections in particular where political parties need numerous candidates, but also in parliamentary elections. This corresponds to Norris and Lovenduski's supply and demand model of political recruitment and the feminist institutionalist notion that the supply of candidates is gendered as our ideas of gender lead women having lesser time, money, confidence and ambition than men (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Also, Lawless and Fox have noted that women tend to underestimate and men overestimate their qualifications to run for political office (Lawless and Fox, 2011, p. 70). Interestingly this difficulty in recruiting female candidates is experienced in all constituencies, and therefore it cannot effectively explain differences between the three constituencies.

The demand side being gendered means that the party elite may consider female aspirants less competent than their male counterparts or hesitate to select female candidates because they expect the electorate to favour certain kinds of candidates. (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) (Krook, 2010, p. 162) Also, according to Krook male political leaders, elected officials or activists are more likely to encourage men than women to run for political office (Krook, 2010, p. 163). Based on the interviewees it is not possible to draw conclusions about this. However, it is possible that one of the reasons why male candidates have succeeded getting

influential supporters and strong support groups in Kymi are, for example, the male networks. This would, however, require further research.

In the Finnish context, where voters have a central role determining who are the candidates that get elected, it is also important to view supply and demand from another perspective: the supply of candidates and the demand that rises from voters' preferences (Giger et al, 2014) (Holli and Wass, 2010). Previous research has shown that a major reason for an unbalanced representation of women in the Finnish parliament is that a majority of men vote for male candidates. When it comes to the Centre Party, in the 2015 parliamentary election, 78 percent of the party's male voters voted for a male candidate. (Pikkala, 2016) According to Giger et al, however, same-gender is not necessarily based on a voter's real preferences, but strongly affected by external conditions (Giger et al, 2014). Conditions supporting gender balance are large district magnitude and balanced candidate lists, where voters have several female candidates available for voting, and there is no need for strategic voting. Based on this research it seems that district magnitude is a more nuanced question, however, as there are smaller regional areas within constituencies that play important role in the recruitment process, campaigning and voting (see Chapter 5.1.3. Objectives for candidate list and Chapter 5.6. Electoral setting) Even though the party would offer both female and male candidates in the constituency, in reality voters and party actives might have fewer options if they want to vote for a candidate who comes from a certain geographical area, or if they want to ensure that a Centre parliamentarian gets elected from their region.

6.1. Kymi Constituency

In the Kymi constituency the strong position that many incumbents have is clearly etched in the interviewees. Female candidates, especially, struggle running strong electoral campaigns. In the 2003-2015 period only one woman had a 'good result' (receiving at least 50% of the number of votes the last elected parliamentarian received) (Appendix 10). This can be seen in the critique that the regional Centre Party organisations receive from some interviewees. Compared with Central Finland and Oulu, in Karelia and Kymenlaakso regional organisations and their

central actors receive more accusations of being partial and too closely tied with some of the incumbents and their campaigns.

In Kymi, Centre's support has been lower than in the rest of the country in general. While the number of elected Centre parliamentarians has been about the same as in Kymi and Central Finland, (3-4 parliamentarians), the constituency's electoral setting is shaped by the fact that it consists of two separate regions and regional Centre Party organisations. This is one of the factors that can explain some of the male dominance and the stable position that constituency's incumbents have had. According to Giger et al (2014) district magnitude is one of the contextual factors increasing same-gender voting of men and restraining women's possibility to vote women. Does a constituency that is divided into two separate areas behave like two small constituencies? If voters think similarly to what Centre activists think, they might see a risk that Centre could possibly lose a parliamentarian in that particular region if votes are divided too evenly between the region's candidates. Furthermore, based on the interviewees it seems that campaign resources are divided unevenly, as the party activists focus on getting the top candidates elected. Thus, it seems that the electoral setting in the Region leaves new candidates with less votes and support, which in turn does not encourage them to run several times. Finally, support groups seem to have a central role in Kymi as several elected parliamentarians have had the same strong background influencers or support groups behind them. The key question here is: why female candidates have not succeeded inheriting these support groups and supporters. Answering this question would require an even closer look into these constituencies.

When it comes to attitudes, some of the interviewees suggested that traditional gender roles and discrimination against women hinders women from taking a bigger role in Centre politics in Kymi. There are however varying experiences in different municipalities. Interestingly, Kymi was the only constituency where some interviewees questioned whether the 40 percent target for female candidates is a positive thing in the first place, suggesting that having fewer female candidates can give those female candidates who run better chances to get elected. If questioning balanced lists is indeed more common in Karelia and Kymenlaakso

than in other researched regions, this could partly explain why the number of female candidates has declined in the constituencies in past elections. When it comes to the role of women's organisation, there are contradicting views. What is clear is that women's organisation has not been effective promoting equality in either of the regions.

6.2. Oulu Constituency

Oulu, and more precisely North Ostrobothnia, is a region with strong Centre organisation and many party members as well as voters. Primaries are common and the candidate recruitment process is decentralised. Many interviewees highlight the role of municipal and local level influencers in candidate recruitment. Because of the internal competition, it is hard to become Centre's candidate in Oulu. Those people who make their way on the list often have strong support in their home area and are therefore able to run good campaigns. Furthermore, nearly all candidates succeed in obtaining good election results and gaining at least half of the number of votes that the last elected parliamentarian received (Appendix 10).

When we look at gender parity, it seems that this kind of process is not the most favourable for women: over the years there have been constantly fewer female candidates than male candidates on the lists in the Oulu constituency. On the other hand, once women have been selected as candidates, they have succeeded in getting elected in the corresponding proportion (one third of the candidates have been women and one third of the elected parliamentarians have been women). However, in the 2011 and 2015 elections where percentage of female candidates rose up to 39 percent, the percentage of female parliamentarians did not follow. (Chapter 4.13.)

If the Centre organisation and municipal politics remains the main path to the candidate list, it is essential that women strengthen their position at the local level and within the party organisation. Based on the interviews it seems that increased equality at the local level requires that the old local politicians give space to a new generation but also that women have the courage and interest to participate. All

interviewees complain that it is difficult to find enthusiastic women that would be willing to participate in municipal politics. This is of course a hindrance for equality as in the Oulu constituency candidates to parliamentary election are often recruited through municipal politics. An important question is why women are less interested? Is it only the supply side explanations or is there something that the Centre Party organisation could do differently? Some interviewees suggest that there are local practises in some municipalities that drive women away from Centre politics, and these municipalities remain male dominated. On the other hand, women have taken predominant roles, such as chairperson of municipal council or municipal board, in other municipalities. This is a signal that the lack of female candidates and strong woman politicians is not a law of nature but a changeable situation. Women's role in municipal politics in North Ostrobothnia could be an interesting topic for further study.

6.3. Central Finland Constituency

In Central Finland, there has been 36 to 50 percent female candidates on the list and the proportion of female parliamentarians has fluctuated between zero and 67 percent during the examined time period. In the researched elections development was positive, the number of female parliamentarians stabilising to about 50 percent. An important factor was the fact that there were two strong female parliamentarians, Anne Kalmari and Aila Paloniemi, who made their way to the parliament and maintained strong positions in the constituency. While the recruitment process is centralised, meaning that the regional party organisation (party board and executive manager) is a central influencer recruiting candidates and overseeing list formation, Central Finland has an open recruitment process. According to the interviewees it is easy to become a candidate, and a candidate with good networks and determination will most likely be able to get on to the list.

The proportion of candidates who have run strong campaigns has fluctuated being much lower than in the Oulu constituency. However, in all elections there have always been strong female candidates who have either been elected or succeeded making 'good' or 'promising' results. This gives a positive example for other women who are interested in running, and for voters and supporters: it is possible

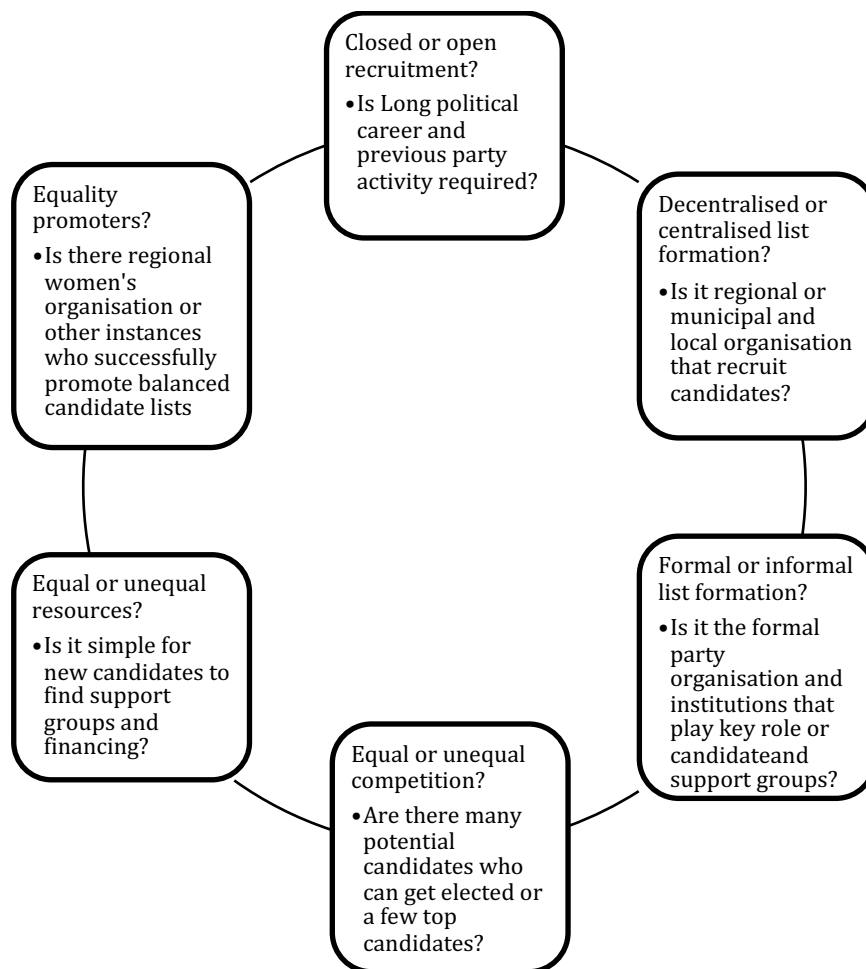
that a woman gets elected. It also shows that party actives are willing to campaign for female candidates and voters ready to vote for women. When it comes to the role of women's organisation and attitudes toward equality, Central Finland seems to take gender equality seriously. Interviewees suggest that the gender balanced lists are partly a result of the region's strong women influencers, with backgrounds in women's organisation, who have pushed equality forward in the region and at the local level. Apparently, women's organisation have sometimes pushed women candidates forward in a way that has left some male politicians feeling discriminated.

However, there are challenges even in Central Finland. In Central Finland, like in all three constituencies, the supply of female candidates is a challenge for Centre, as recruiting female candidates is more difficult than recruiting male candidates. Furthermore, similarly to other constituencies some interviewees report discrimination against women, especially when they gain important positions in municipal politics.

6.4. Explaining differences

Figure 3 below summarises key factors in which the list formation process and electioneering differs in the three researched constituencies.

Figure 3: Differing list formation processes



Formal party's rules for list formation are in full use in Oulu where Centre's party organisation is strong and there are many who are willing to become candidates. Primaries are common and it is hard to become a candidate in the first place. The tough internal competition makes the recruitment process closed from an outsider's perspective. Earlier experience from party organisation and leading positions in municipal politics are valued when potential candidates are recruited. The regional party board sets targets for the candidate list and the general meeting can make some changes to it, but the recruitment process is mainly decentralised and led by municipal organisations and their influencers. Closed and decentralised recruitment processes can have a negative influence on the number of female candidates, especially if municipal politics and local centre organisations are male dominated. Furthermore, it can be difficult to ensure that targets that are set for the candidate list at the Regional level and are followed in the decentralised

process. On the other hand, internal competition ensures that almost all candidates have strong support from their own area and resources to run their campaigns.

In Kymi and Central Finland candidate recruitment is more open and it is possible to become a candidate even with less political experience, especially if the candidate is woman or from a regional area where Centre has no other candidates. Instead of merits within party, recruiters look for candidates who have differing profiles, previous visibility and networks. While open recruitment makes it easier for newcomers to become candidates in Kymi and Central Finland, in Oulu the internal competition and strong party organisation ensure that nearly all candidates have resources to run campaigns. In Kymi and Central Finland there are several filler candidates who do not succeed in running successful campaigns. At the same time, it is important to remember that Centre's electoral support and organisational strength is weaker in these two constituencies than in Oulu, and therefore it can be more difficult for candidates to find supporters, campaign funding and voters in Kymi and Central Finland.

While the regional party board oversees the candidate recruitment process in Kymi, based on the interviews the list formation process seems rather informal and even hard to describe. Primaries are rare and the candidate's support groups seem to have a strong influence in the process encouraging their own candidates to run and seeking support for their campaigns. Based on the interviewees it seems that the list formation process is influenced by the fact that a large number of Centre Party actors support one or two incumbents. Some of the interviewees criticise the party's leading regional actors claiming that they are in fact more interested in ensuring their favourite candidate's position than actively recruiting new candidates with most potential. Therefore, even though the recruitment process is open and it is possible to become a candidate without a long political career in Kymi, several interviewees question whether the women with most potential are encouraged to run.

It is important to note that it is typical that there are internal tensions within political parties. The sample of this study is too small to draw strong conclusions regarding topics that divide the interviewees. While it would require a deeper study to analyse these internal tensions and contradictory views properly, case studies indicate that in the Central Finland and Oulu constituencies regional organisations and party boards have more unbiased role when it comes to supporting candidates than in Kymi. Based on the interviews, competition between candidates seem to be most unequal in Kymi, and a candidate needs either exceptionally strong stamina or a strong inherited support group in order to get elected. Election results reveal that in the past elections only a few new candidates have succeeded in running strong campaigns and even fewer campaigns have truly challenged the incumbents (Appendix 10). What is more striking is however, that there are very few female candidates who have succeeded with their campaigns or even decided to run several times. Meanwhile, there have been several new male parliamentarians raising to the parliament.

Finally, in Central Finland regional party organisation (regional board and executive manager) strongly aim for balanced candidate lists and is heavily involved with the list formation process but also informal influencers such as support groups have a central role promoting their favourite candidate. Here, individual equality promoters such as a former chairperson of the region and regional women's organisation have had an impact ensuring that candidate lists have been balanced. The recruitment process is open meaning that it is relatively easy to become a candidate. Competition between candidates is equal in that sense it is not self-evident that all incumbents are on the top of the candidate list. However, there are also several filler candidates who do not gain good or promising election results. While it is not clear why Central Finland has succeeded in raising the number of female candidates and parliamentarians, it seems that the open recruitment process combined with equal resources, a relatively unbiased regional party organisation that strives for balanced lists, and a somewhat open electoral setting has supported gender parity.

7 Conclusions

Finland is considered to be one of the best countries in the world in regards of gender equality. In today's Finland, women are more educated than men and women vote more actively. However, they are still a minority in the Finnish parliament. Women are less likely to serve as ministers and are a minority in other powerful political positions. Furthermore, there are large variations among Finnish political parties when it comes to the proportion of woman parliamentarians, and the Finnish Centre Party is one of the least balanced parties. This Master's Thesis explored factors that could explain women's low political representation in the Centre. The research question was: What can explain regional differences in women's political representation within a political party?

The research first explored how women's political representation has developed in different constituencies over time when it comes to the number of elected female parliamentarians. The quantitative overview of the constituencies shows that there are substantial differences between the electoral constituencies when it comes to gender parity of elected parliamentarians, as well as the share of votes that female candidates have received for their party's list. Furthermore, constituencies differ when it comes to the turnover in the composition of the group of elected parliamentarians. This part of the study also addressed that the constituencies have differing trends when it comes to women's representation – some constituencies becoming more gender balanced, others more male dominated.

Based on the first part of the study, three case studies were selected for in depth studies. The case studies were explorative in nature, and were conducted by interviews. The interviewees were central Centre Party actors, parliamentarians and candidates who have experience in the workings of the regional party organization. Based on the interviews it became clear that while all Centre Party organisations have the same formal rules, the list formation process, the regional practises and the electoral setting is different in all of them.

A major difference between the constituencies is their electoral setting and the role of regional party organisation and actives. Kymi constituency, which has the fewest female parliamentarians from the researched constituencies, includes two Centre Party regions. Each of the regions risks to lose its seat, if the region's votes are distributed too widely. Based on the interviews it seems that in Kymi, internal competition is less equal as the incumbent parliamentarians have a strong position within the Centre organisation. The setting changes when an incumbent parliamentarian steps aside. When an elected parliamentarian steps down, this creates a situation where more voters and supporters are available for newcomers. It seems, however, that female candidates have not succeeded in inheriting supporters from the relinquishing parliamentarians. Central Finland has been the most gender balanced constituency. Key factors supporting women's political representation have been an open recruitment process combined with equal campaigning resources, strong influencers who have pushed for balanced candidate lists. Furthermore, a relatively unbiased regional party organisation that strives for balanced lists and a somewhat open electoral setting have also played an important role. A relevant subject for further research would be to study internal competition in political parties: how that influences women's representation and same-gender voting.

While this case study has its limitations, it has provided support to many findings of previous studies. In line with previous feminist institutionalist research, the supply of candidates seems to be a challenge for the Centre Party. The question of supply could be an interesting and important subject for further research. According to the interviewees, the supply of woman candidates is a challenge in all three constituencies, not only in Kymi and Oulu. Therefore, it is unlikely that the supply of candidates could explain regional differences.

Previous studies have suggested that the gap between women and men in same-gender voting is one of the factors that explain women's lower political representation in Finland. According to the previous studies, large district magnitude gender balanced candidate lists reduce men's tendency to vote male candidates and increases women's votes for women. Based on this study

constituencies are, however, divided into smaller entities, Oulu is divided into bottomlands, and Kymi is divided into Karelia and Kymenlaakso regions, and Karelia is divided into Lappeenranta's region and Northern part of the Region. Therefore, an interesting question for further research would be to study regional voting. If a voter prefers to vote a candidate who comes from a particular area, this reduces the voter's possibility to choose a candidate of preferred gender, even though the political party would offer a balanced candidate list in the constituency.

Researching women's descriptive representation is relevant in order to better understand how our democratic system works, and how it could become more inclusive, not only for women but for also for different minority groups. While women's descriptive representation does not tell everything about the state of equality in a country, it is a sign of structural inequalities if women are not equally represented in political decision-making. Women's political representation is often analysed by comparing countries, electoral systems or political parties. This case study has provided a closer look into a political party showing that there are great variations within political parties when it comes to women's political representation, electoral setting in different parts of a country and functioning of party organisation. Understanding this manifoldness provides rich field for further research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Electoral constituencies in 1999 and 1995 elections. Statistics Finland. Retrieved 27.2.2018 from <https://www.stat.fi/tk/he/vaalit/vaalit99/vaalipiirit.html>

1. Helsingin vaalipiiri (1995: Helsingin kaupungin vaalipiiri), Helsingfors valkrets, Helsinki constituency
2. Uudenmaan vaalipiiri (1995: Uudenmaan läänin vaalipiiri), Nylands valkrets, Uusimaa constituency
3. Varsinais-Suomen vaalipiiri (1995: Turun läänin etel. vaalipiiri), Egentliga Finlands valkrets, Varsinais-Suomi constituency
4. Satakunnan vaalipiiri (1995: Turun läänin pohj.vaalipiiri), Satakunta valkrets, Satakunta constituency
5. Ahvenanmaan maakunnan vaalipiiri, Landskapet Ålands valkrets, Åland constituency
6. Hämeen vaalipiiri (1995: Hämeen läänin etel. vaalipiiri), Tavastlands valkrets, Häme constituency
7. Pirkanmaan vaalipiiri (1995: Hämeen läänin pohj. vaalipiiri), Birkalands valkrets, Pirkanmaa constituency
8. Kymen vaalipiiri (1995: Kymen läänin vaalipiiri), Kymmene valkrets, Kymi constituency
9. Mikkelin vaalipiiri (1995: Mikkelin läänin vaalipiiri), S:t Michels valkrets, Mikkelin constituency
10. Kuopion vaalipiiri (1995: Kuopion läänin vaalipiiri), Kuopio valkrets, Kuopio constituency
11. Pohjois-Karelian vaalipiiri (1995: Pohjois-Karelian läänin vaalipiiri), Norra Karelen valkrets, North Karelia constituency
12. Vaasan vaalipiiri (1995: Vaasan läänin vaalipiiri), Vasa valkrets, Vaasa constituency

13. Keski-Suomen vaalipiiri (1995: Keski-Suomen läänin vaalipiiri), Mellersta
Finlands valkrets, Central Finland constituency

14. Oulun vaalipiiri (1995: Oulun läänin vaalipiiri), Uleåborgs valkrets, Oulu
constituency

15. Lapin vaalipiiri (1995: Lapin läänin vaalipiiri), Lapplands valkrets, Lapland
constituency

Appendix 2

Centre Party Candidates in Southeast Finland constituency in parliamentary election 2015 as allocated to Kymi and South Savo constituencies

Candidate list retrieved from Elections website of the Ministry of Justice.

Available online 28 Feb 2018,

<http://www.vaalit.fi/fi/index/ehdokkaat/kaakkois-suomenvaalipiiri.html#suomenkeskustar.p>.

List of municipalities belonging to Kymi and South Savo constituencies retrieved 28 Feb 2018 from, http://www.stat.fi/til/pvaa/pvaa_2018-01-30_luo_002_fi.html

Kymi: Markku Heikkilä (Lappeenranta), Vappu Kuokka (Vironlahti), Markku Laukkanen (Kouvola), Antti Pakkanen (Hamina), Markku Pakkanen (Kouvola), Anniina Peltola (Iitti), Kairit Tahvola (Imatra), Kimmo Tiilikainen, (Ruokolahti) Ari Torniainen (Lappeenranta), Jukka Vuorinen (Savitaipale) 3/10

South Savo: Hanna Kosonen (Savonlinna), Jari Leppä (Pertunmaa), Pekka Pöyry (Mikkeli), Merja Rehn (Mikkeli), Eero Sistonen (Rantasalmi), Hannu Tiusanen (Kangasniemi), Kaija Viljakainen (Pieksämäki) 3/7

Appendix 3

Centre Party Candidates in Savo Karelia constituency in parliamentary election 2015 as allocated to North Savo and North Karelia constituencies

Candidate list retrieved from Elections website of the Ministry of Justice.

Available online 28 Feb 2018, <http://www.vaalit.fi/fi/index/ehdokkaat/savo-Karelianvaalipiiri.html#suomenkeskustar.p>.

List of municipalities belonging to North Savo and North Karelia constituencies retrieved 28 Feb 2018 from, http://www.stat.fi/til/pvaa/pvaa_2018-01-30_luo_002_fi.html

North Savo: Hannakaisa Heikkinen (Kiuruvesi), Aino Kanninen (Leppävirta), Elsi Katainen (Pielavesi), Antti Kivelä (Kuopio), Seppo Kääriäinen (Iisalmi), Sallamaarit Markkanen (Siilinjärvi), Anna Olkkonen (Kuopio), Juho Pahajoki (Rautalampi), Markku Rossi (Kuopio) (5/9)

North Karelia: Rauli-Jan Albert (Valtimo), Hannu Hoskonen (Ilomantsi), Hanna Huttunen (Outokumpu), Sinikka Musikka (Kitee), Juha Mustonen (Joensuu), Eero reijonen (Liperi), Anu Vehviläinen (Joensuu) (3/7)

Appendix 4

Parliamentary elections by Year, Area, Party, Support for parties and Sex

		All Parties together		Centre		Candidate's number of votes				Percentage of votes %	
		Candidate's number of votes		Candidate's number of votes		Candidate's number of votes		All Candida		Men	
		All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Women	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Women	All Candidates	Men
046 Enonkoski	2015	855	398	124	274	46,5	31,2	68,8			
090 Heinävesi	2015	1924	738	469	269	38,4	63,6	36,4			
097 Hirvensalmi	2015	1269	562	478	84	44,3	85,1	14,9			
171 Joroinen	2015	2549	932	623	309	36,6	66,8	33,2			
178 Juva	2015	3620	1683	1142	541	46,5	67,9	32,1			
213 Kangasniemi	2015	3156	1561	1428	133	49,5	91,5	8,5			
491 Mikkeli	2015	29341	7871	5578	2293	26,8	70,9	29,1			
507 Mäntyharju	2015	3470	1257	1140	117	36,2	90,7	9,3			
588 Pertunmaa	2015	1025	609	593	16	59,4	97,4	2,6			
593 Pieksämäki	2015	9394	3172	1231	1941	33,8	38,8	61,2			
623 Puumala	2015	1411	656	445	211	46,5	67,8	32,2			
681 Rantasalmi	2015	2087	1040	766	274	49,8	73,7	26,3			
740 Savonlinna	2015	19503	5168	1283	3885	26,5	24,8	75,2			
768 Sulkava	2015	1583	766	392	374	48,4	51,2	48,8			
Total		81187	26413	15692	10721	32,5 %	59,4 %	40,6 %			

Appendix 5

Parliamentary elections by Year, Area, Party, Support for parties and Sex

		All Parties together		Centre		Candidate's number of votes		Percentage of votes %		Women		Men		Women	
		Candidate's number of votes		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates	
		All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men	All Candidates	Men
075 Hamina	2015	10671	2136	1762	374	20,0	82,5	17,5							
142 Iitti	2015	3820	1523	480	1043	39,9	31,5	68,5							
153 Imatra	2015	14889	2062	1770	292	13,8	85,8	14,2							
285 Kotka	2015	27335	1941	1398	543	7,1	72,0	28,0							
286 Kouvola	2015	46518	10208	8290	1918	21,9	81,2	18,8							
405 Lappeenranta	2015	37665	8218	7375	843	21,8	89,7	10,3							
416 Lemi	2015	1700	710	657	53	41,8	92,5	7,5							
441 Luumäki	2015	2780	1135	1025	110	40,8	90,3	9,7							
489 Miehikkälä	2015	1144	622	537	85	54,4	86,3	13,7							
580 Parikkala	2015	3024	1487	1154	333	49,2	77,6	22,4							
624 Pyhtää	2015	2787	475	390	85	17,0	82,1	17,9							
689 Rautjärvi	2015	2054	743	668	75	36,2	89,9	10,1							
700 Ruokolahti	2015	3194	1235	1150	85	38,7	93,1	6,9							
739 Savitaipale	2015	2208	1192	1140	52	54,0	95,6	4,4							
831 Taipalsaari	2015	2717	773	690	83	28,5	89,3	10,7							
935 Virolahti	2015	1852	921	593	328	49,7	64,4	35,6							
Total		164358	35381	29079	6302	21,5 %	82,2 %	17,8 %							

Appendix 6

Parliamentary elections by Year, Area, Party, Support for parties and Sex

		All Parties together		Centre		Candidate's number of votes		Percentage of votes %		Men	Women	
		Candidate's number of votes		Candidate's number of votes		All Candidates		All Candidates				
		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates				
2015	140 Iisalmi	11860		3724		1743		1981		31,4	46,8	53,2
2015	174 Juankoski	2624		1045		264		781		39,8	25,3	74,7
2015	204 Kaavi	1551		702		261		441		45,3	37,2	62,8
2015	239 Keitele	1441		632		178		454		43,9	28,2	71,8
2015	263 Kiuruvesi	4754		2587		190		2397		54,4	7,3	92,7
2015	297 Kuopio	58358		15447		6845		8602		26,5	44,3	55,7
2015	402 Lapinlahti	5214		1987		741		1246		38,1	37,3	62,7
2015	420 Leppävirta	5556		2222		319		1903		40,0	14,4	85,6
2015	595 Pielavesi	2649		1385		183		1202		52,3	13,2	86,8
2015	686 Rautalamppi	1803		910		667		243		50,5	73,3	26,7
2015	687 Rautavaara	915		313		120		193		34,2	38,3	61,7
2015	749 Sillinjärvi	11106		4139		1032		3107		37,3	24,9	75,1
2015	762 Sonkajärvi	2372		993		364		629		41,9	36,7	63,3
2015	778 Suonenjoki	3639		1590		1048		542		43,7	65,9	34,1
2015	844 Tervo	951		449		184		265		47,2	41,0	59,0
2015	857 Tuusniemi	1481		663		160		503		44,8	24,1	75,9
2015	915 Varkaus	11247		1748		474		1274		15,5	27,1	72,9
2015	921 Vesanto	1281		703		288		415		54,9	41,0	59,0
2015	925 Vieremä	2110		1025		361		664		48,6	35,2	64,8
	Total	130912		42264		15422		26842		32,3 %	36,5 %	63,5 %

Appendix 7

Parliamentary elections by Year, Area, Party, Support for parties and Sex

		All Parties together		Centre		Percentage of votes %		Men	Women	7,7
		Candidate's number of votes		Candidate's number of votes		All Candidates				
		All Candidates		All Candidates		All Candidates				
146 Ilomantsi	2015		3037		1704	132	56,1		92,3	
167 Joensuu	2015		39266		10129	4879	25,8		51,8	48,2
176 Juuka	2015		2761		1112	353	40,3		68,3	31,7
260 Kitee	2015		5629		2415	1667	42,9		31,0	69,0
276 Kontiolahti	2015		7256		2293	996	31,6		56,6	43,4
309 Outokumpu	2015		3637		1477	1180	40,6		20,1	79,9
422 Lieksa	2015		6452		1738	610	26,9		64,9	35,1
426 Liperi	2015		6218		2452	848	39,4		65,4	34,6
541 Nurmies	2015		4094		1636	441	40,0		73,0	27,0
607 Polvijärvi	2015		2464		1168	449	47,4		61,6	38,4
707 Raakkylä	2015		1374		512	256	37,3		50,0	50,0
848 Tohmajärvi	2015		2518		997	502	39,6		49,6	50,4
911 Valtimo	2015		1262		676	149	53,6		78,0	22,0
Total			85968		28309	12462	32,9 %		56,0 %	44,0 %

Appendix 8

Question Pattern (translated from Finnish)

First: You have received participant consent form regarding this research. Do you have any questions regarding it?

Starting question:

In which roles you have become familiar with the candidate recruitment process?

1. Parliamentary election is coming, how does Centre Party's recruitment process proceed in your constituency?
 - Do you usually organise primaries?
 - What is the role of the regional organisation, local associations and municipal organisations?
 - Who or what instances are the most important influencers in the process? Do they have differing interests?
 - Who takes care of the diversity of the list?
2. What kind of person is a good candidate for Centre Party in your constituency?
 - Does Centre somehow map potential candidates in between the elections?
 - Is it encouraged for small child parents to become candidates?
 - Are there differing requirements for women and men?
 - How important is municipal politics if you want to become candidate and parliamentarian?
 - Do you think municipal politics is male or female dominated in your constituency?

3. What makes some people say no to candidacy? Are there differences between the genders?
4. What does gathering a support group and financing for campaign require from a candidate?
 - What kind of campaign is a good campaign?
5. Does the region somehow support campaigns?
6. If you think of the elected Centre parliamentarians from your constituency past years...
 - Why you think they have got elected? What is the secret of their popularity? What kind of people you find behind them?
7. What kind of people succeed in politics? Why some people do not succeed?
8. Do all candidates on Centre's list have the potential to get elected? Why you think some people have not succeeded to get elected?
9. What do you think about the number of female candidates and elected parliamentarians in your constituency?
 - What do you think these numbers tell?
10. How do you think Centre's party actively position themselves when it comes to these numbers and gender equality more generally? Why?
11. Does your region somehow follow state of gender equality in the region and its municipalities and set goals to increase equality?
12. What do you think would increase equality in your region?

13. Do you have something you would like to add? Do you have suggestions for interviewees?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 9

Tutkimustiedote

Tutkimuksen tekijä

Eeva Kärkkäinen, maisteriopiskelija
Helsingin yliopisto, valtiotieteellinen
tiedekunta
P: 0401492201
E-mail: eeva.s.karkkainen@gmail.com

Opinnäytetyön ohjaaja

Sergei Prozorov, vastuullinen tutkija
Helsingin yliopisto, PL 54 Helsingin
yliopisto
P: 0504484392
E-mail: sergei.prozorov@helsinki.fi

Keskusta ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo

Tämä tutkimus kartoittaa syitä keskustan eduskuntaryhmän sukupuolijakaumalle. Kansanedustajien sukupuolijakaumaa tutkiessa vertaillaan usein maita tai puolueita keskenään, mutta tässä tutkimuksessa mielenkiinto kohdistuu saman puolueen eri vaalipiirien välisiin eroihin. Tutkimuksen kvantitatiivisessä osassa selvitetään vaalipiirien välisiä eroja keskustan kansanedustajien ja kansanedustajaehdokkaiden sukupuolijakaumassa 1991-2015. Tutkimuksen kvalitatiivisessä osassa pyritään selvittämään syitä vaalipiirien välisille eroille haastattelemalla keskustavaikuttajia kolmesta eri vaalipiiristä.

Haastattelutapa

Haastattelu tapahtuu videopuhelun välityksellä tai fyysisenä tapaamisena haastateltavan henkilön kanssa etukäteen sovitussa paikassa. Haastattelu on puolistrukturoitu teemahaastattelu, jossa tutkija on valmistellut etukäteen kysymyksiä, mutta haastattelu voi poiketa etukäteen suunnitellusta haastattelurungosta. Haastattelu kestää noin yhden tunnin. Keskustelu nauhoitetaan. Osallistumisesi haastatteluun on vapaaehtoista ja voit vetäytyä siitä halutessasi.

Haastattelun käsittelytapa

Haastattelu nauhoitetaan ja kirjoitetaan tekstiksi, jonka tiedot analysoidaan. Haastatteluja käsitellessä haastateltavista kerrotaan, mistä vaalipiiristä he tulevat, koska tutkimuksessa on tarkoitus vertailla vaalipiirien välisiä eroja. Analyysiä tehdessä kiinnitetään huomiota myös mahdollisiin muihin analyysin aikana esiin nouseviin relevantteihin haastateltavien asemaan liittyviin taustamuuttujiin, mutta tutkimusta kirjoittaessa haastattelut kuvataan niin, että haastateltavan henkilöllisyys ei käy selville. Haastateltavalla on oikeus pyytää haastattelun litteraatti luettavakseen.

Kiitos ajastasi!

Haastateltavan suostumus

Vakuutan, että

- olen lukenut ja ymmärtänyt tämän tutkimustiedotteen
- olen saanut riittävän selvityksen tutkimuksen aiheesta ja tavoitteesta
- osallistumiseni on vapaaehtoista
- annan suostumukseni käyttää haastatteluni tietoja tässä tutkimuksessa

Paikka

Päiväys

Allekirjoitus

Nimenselvennys

Appendix 10

Kymi 2003		Äänimäärä	Kymi 2007		Kymi 2011		Kymi 2015	
*Tiilikainen Kimmo		7866	*Tiilikainen Kimmo	6632	*Tiilikainen, Kimmo	7 094	*Kimmo Tiilikainen	9193
*Laukkanen Markku		7201	*Laukkanen Markku	5328	*Torniainen, Ari	5157	*Markku Pakkanen	6265
*Lahtela Seppo		6451	*Pakkanen Markku	5063	Pakkanen, Markku	4755	*Ari Torniainen	5412
Harju Kyösti		5928	Torniainen Ari	3903	Laukkanen, Markku	4173	Markku Laukkanen	4532
Pakkanen Markku		5015	Harju Kyösti	3029	Tulkki, Jarmo	2222	Anniina Peltola	3837
Tulkki Jarmo		1994	Tulkki Jarmo	2954	Pesonen, Pekka	806	Markku Heikkilä	2406
Hovi Risto		1941	Berg Ari	2709	Länsmans, Liisa	731	Jukka Vuorinen	1574
Kallatsa Marja		1396	Wall Janne	2092	Ylä-Outinen, Mia	691	Antti Pakkanen	1175
Henttonen Irmeli		1340	Aro Marketta	1831	Huuhilo, Marjo	677	Vappu Kuokka	957
Klemola Riitta		1330	Henttonen Irmeli	1720	Kemppi, Jouni	643		
Partanen Tuula		1193	Kekki Anni	1290	Kaijanen, Henna	466		
Lonka Harriet		1123	Tulokas Kalervo	1264	Pakkanen, Antti	433		
Westinen Tuure		854	Tuomala-Pasanen Kirsi	1063	Tuuha, Hanna	325		
Turunen Jarmo		495	Huuhilo Marjo	820	Seppälä, Topi	304		
Good result		18,2 %		36,4 %		16,7 %		33,3 %
Almost good result		18,2 %		36,4 %		25,0 %		50,0 %
Promising result		18,2 %		63,6 %		25,0 %		50,0 %
Central Finland 2003			Central Finland 2007		Central Finland 2011		Central Finland 2015	
*Pekkarinen Mauri		12164	*Pekkarinen Mauri	9102	*Kalmari, Anne	9288	*Anne Kalmari	10216
*Oinonen Lauri		6686	*Kalmari Anne	8266	*Pekkarinen, Mauri	7112	*Mauri Pekkarinen	9170
*Neittaanmäki Petri		5300	*Paloniemi Aila	5461	*Paloniemi, Aila	4146	*Aila Paloniemi	3861
*Paloniemi Aila		4887	*Oinonen Lauri	4621	Oinonen, Lauri	2888	*Petri Honkonen	2978
Leppänen Johannes		4732	Sorri Katja	3076	Takala, Pauliina	2121	Petri Neittaanmäki	2380
Kalmari Anne		4426	Suomala Antti	2653	Neittaanmäki, Petri	1959	Joonas Könttä	2185
Pilonen Susanna		2162	Neittaanmäki Petri	2515	Suosaari, Voitto	1460	Pertti Lehtomäki	1874
Koponen Tiina		2129	Friman Esko	2416	Kekkonen, Anssi	770	Lauri Oinonen	1845
Utunen Heini		1761	Reipas Anu	2395	Ikkelä-Koski, Tuulia	720	Ilkka Kemppainen	1488
Parkkonen Pertti		1456	Takala Pauliina	2392	Järvinen, Sari	606	Tuulia Ikkelä-Koski	1216
Pekkarinen Sirpa		1200	Laitinen Markku	1890	Vuorenpää, Pirjo	426	Matti Similä	1203
Lindell Leila		844	Tuomisto Timo	1447	Lindell, Leila	402	Sari Hovila	1000
Seppänen Jussi		460	Utunen Heini	643	Mäntyjärvi, Hannele	230	Samuli Mattila	683
Kotimäki Ilari		325	Damskägg Yrjö	181	Toivola, Petri	143	Satu Koskinen	630
Good result		20,0 %		60,0 %		18,2 %		50,0 %
Almost good result		40,0 %		60,0 %		27,3 %		70,0 %
Promising result		50,0 %		70,0 %		36,4 %		80,0 %
Oulu 2003			Oulu 2007		Oulu 2011		Oulu 2015	
*Lehtomäki Paula		11063	*Lehtomäki Paula	16390	*Tölli, Tapani	9777	*Juha Sipilä	30758
*Rantakangas Antti		8963	*Tölli Tapani	8458	*Rantakangas, Antti	6994	*Tapani Tölli	9369
*Viikuna Pekka		7269	*Vehkaperä Mirja	6933	*Vehkaperä, Mirja	6852	*Antti Rantakangas	5960
*Karjula Kyösti		7077	*Kerola Inkeri	6431	*Kerola, Inkeri	6289	*Juha Pylväs	5861
*Moilanen-Savolainen		7073	*Karjula Kyösti	6016	*Sipilä, Juha	5543	*Niilo Keränen	5696
*Kerola Inkeri		6923	*Rantakangas Antti	5933	*Korhonen, Timo	5369	*Mirja Vehkaperä	5420
*Hänninen Tuomo		6780	*Hänninen Tuomo	5851	Keränen, Niilo	5228	*Marisanna Jarva	5347
*Koski Markku		6547	*Korhonen Timo	5597	Hänninen, Tuomo	46724	*Timo Korhonen	5180
*Tölli Tapani		6476	*Viikuna Pekka	5450	Karjalainen, Aki	4348	*Ulla Parviainen	4523
Säkinen Timo		6328	Moilanen-Savolainen Riik	5381	Isola, Sanna	4023	Eija Nivala	4476
Keränen Niilo		5353	Harju Pauli	4846	Oikarinen, Kyösti	3791	Hanna-Leena Mattila	4389
Vehkaperä Mirja		5264	Koski Markku	3960	Nivala, Eija	3642	Jarmo Vuolteenaho	4242
Myllylä Raili		5236	Rinta-Jouppi Meeri	3795	Isomaa, Eero	3367	Tuomas Kettunen	3636
Taskila Paula		4311	Oikarinen Kyösti	3533	Jarva, Marisanna	3100	Riikka Moilanen	3383
Kiipeläinen Sami		4096	Isola Sanna	3168	Louet, Kaisa	2515	Hannu Takkula	3078
Myllyniemi Kari		3906	Pylväs Keijo	3141	Koski, Markku	2448	Matias Ojalehto	2911
Oikarinen Kyösti		3306	Kiipeläinen Sami	2867	Mattila, Juho	1780	Eeva-Maria Parkkinen	1508
Kemppainen Hannu		2365	Kemppainen Esa	1063	Niskanen, Ritva-Liisa	1718	Matti Leiviskä	844
Good result		88,9 %		88,9 %		66,7 %		77,8 %
Almost good result		88,9 %		88,9 %		83,3 %		77,8 %
Promising result		88,9 %		88,9 %		91,7 %		88,9 %